

THE
Destruction of Jerusalem,
AN
ABSOLUTE AND IRRESISTIBLE
PROOF
OF
THE DIVINE ORIGIN
OF
CHRISTIANITY :

INCLUDING

A Narrative of the Calamities which befell the Jews, so
- far as they tend to verify our Lord's Predictions
relative to that event.

WITH

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE
CITY *AND* TEMPLE

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“ I consider the prophecy relative to the destruction of the  
Jewish nation, if there were nothing else to support Chris-  
tianity, as absolutely irresistible ”

Mr. *Erskine's* Speech at the Trial of *William*  
for publishing *Paine's* Age of Reason,

~~~~~  
FIFTH AMERICAN EDITION.

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## PREFACE.

**HISTORICAL** records of events more generally interesting than the destruction of Jerusalem, and the subversion of the Jewish state, by the arms of the Romans. Their intimate connexion with the dissolution of the levitical economy, and the establishment of christianity in the world, the striking verification which they afford of so many of the prophecies, both of the old and new testament, and the powerful arguments for the divine authority of the scriptures which are thence derived; the solemn warning and admonitions which they hold out to all nations, but especially to such as are favoured with the light and blessings of Revelation ; together with the impressive and terrific grandeur of the events themselves—are circumstances which must always insure to the subject of the following pages more than ordinary degrees of interest and importance. Many eminent and learned men have employed their pens in the illustration of it ; but the fruits of their labours are, for the most part, contained in large and expensive works, out of the reach of numbers, to whom the discussion might prove equally interesting and improving.

*For the use and gratification of such, the present treatise, in a more accessible and familiar form, is diffidently offered to the public. In order that it might be better adapted to the general reader, critical inquiries and tedious details are equally avoided; but it has been the care of the writer not to omit any important fact or argument that, in his opinion, tended to elucidate the subject. Countenanced by the example of many respectable names, he has ventured to introduce the extraordinary prodigies, xvwhich, according to Josephus, preceded the destruction of the Holy City. He has also added a few sentences in their defence, but he does not intend thereby to express his unqualified admission of their genuineness.*

*Upon the execution of the tract, generally, the public will determine. Usefulness is the writer's main object; and if a perusal of it shall contribute, under the Divine Blessing, to confirm the wavering-faith of only one christian, or to shake the vain confidence of a single unbeliever, his labour will be abundantly rewarded.*

G. H.

LONDON,

January 1, 1805.

THE  
DESTRUCTION                      OF                      IERUSALEM.

**I**n E goodness of God stamps all his proceedings. It has pleased Him not only to communicate to mankind a revelation, which, to the pious mind, bears in its *internal* texture its own evidence and recommendation, but also to accompany it with such *external* proofs of a sacred origin, as seem calculated to strike, with irresistible conviction, even those ~~who~~ **are** least disposed to admit the truth of the Holy Scriptures. In order to evidence their divine authenticity, God has done as much as man could possibly have required\*.

\* This assertion is sufficient for the writer's purpose. The fact, however, is, that the Almighty hath, in this respect, as well as in every other, done for man " *exceeding abundantly above all that*" he can " *ask or think.*" The scheme of that evidence which demonstrates the divine authority of the Bible could only have been constructed by Him " *who knoweth all things, and who seeth the end from the beginning.*"

For supposing that it had been referred to mankind to **have** prescribed for their own satisfaction, and that of their **posterity**. the credentials which His messengers should bring with them, in order to authenticate the divinity of their mission, could the wisest and the most sceptical amongst **men** have proposed, for this end, any thing more conclusive than,

*First*, Demonstrations of power, surpassing every possible effect of human skill and **report**--and,

*Second*, Intelligence relative to the **future** events and circumstances of nations and individuals, which no human sagacity would ever pretend to foresee or predict ?

If such had been the evidences demanded, what addition to them could possibly have been suggested ? Is it in the human **mind** to imagine any tests of divine authority better adapted, sooner or later, to ex-

pose the artifices, and frustrate the designs, of an impostor ? In vain will the profoundest policy attempt to discover means more suitable to this purpose, and, with respect to the reception of the revelation itself, more perfectly fitted to banish all reasonable doubt on the ~~one~~ hand, and to invalidate the charge of credulity on the other. Now these, precisely, are the credentials with which it has pleased God to sanction the testimony of his inspired messengers, as recorded in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. *They wrought ~~miracles~~ they foretold future events.* Thus all that man himself could demand has been given, and objectors are left entirely without excuse.

Jesus Christ, the principal of those messengers, like his illustrious types and predecessors Moses and Elijah, proclaimed and attested his divine mission at once by **miraculous** acts, and by prophetic declarations. . His miracles were numerous, di-

versified, and performed in various parts of his native country : they were not frivolous tricks, calculated merely to excite wonder, and gratify curiosity, but acts of substantial utility and benevolence. They were publicly, but not **boastingly** nor ostentatiously **displayed** : in the presence not of friends only, but also of ~~enemies~~—of enemies exasperated to malignity against him, because he had censured their vices and exposed their hypocrisy, and who were actuated by every motive which a spirit of revenge could suggest to incurable prejudice, to induce them to detect the imposition of his miracles, *it false*, and to deny and discredit them, if *true*. To *deny* them they did not attempt, but they strove to sink them in disrepute, and thereby furnished a striking specimen of those embarrassing dilemmas, into which infidelity is continually betraying her votaries. They ascribed them to the agency of Satan ; thus representing him, “*who was a liar from -the beginning*” as contributing

to the diffusion of **truth**—“*the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience*” as promoting the cause of holiness, and as co-operating in the overthrow of *his own kingdom*, with Him “*who was manifested to destroy the works of the devil* P’

The prophecies of our Lord, as well as his miracles, were many, and of great variety. They were not delivered with pomp and **parade**, but rose out of occasions, and seem to have resulted, for the most part, from his affectionate solicitude for those who then were, or who might afterwards become, his disciples. While the fulfilment of some of these predictions was confined to the term of his mission and the limits of his country, the accomplishment of others extended to all nations, and to every future age of the world.

Of the prophecies which have already been fulfilled, few, perhaps, are so interesting in themselves, or so striking in



their accomplishment as those which relate to the *destruction of Jerusalem and its temple*, and the signal calamities which every where befel the Jewish nation. The chief of our Lord's predictions, relative to these events, are contained in Matt. xxiv. Mark xiii. Luke xix. 41-44 \* xxi. and xxiii. 27-30: and we may with confidence appeal to the *facts* which verify them as conclusive and incontrovertible proofs of the divinity of his mission. Before, however, we enter upon this illustration, it may be gratifying to the reader, and add considerably to the interest of many of the subsequent pages, to give in this place a brief description of that renowned city and its temple.

Jerusalem was built on two mountains. Three celebrated walls surrounded the city on every side, except that which was deemed inaccessible, and there it was defended by one wall only. The most ancient of these walls was remarkable for

## DESCRIPTION OF JERUSALEM.

its great strength, and was, moreover, erected on a hanging rock, and fortified by sixty towers. On the middle wail there were fourteen towers **only**; but on the third, which was also distinguished by the extraordinary merit of its architecture, there were no less than ninety. The celebrated tower of Psephinos, before which Titus at first encamped, was erected on this latter wall, and even excelled it in the superior style of its architecture : it was seventy cubits high, and had eight angles, each of which commanded most extensive and beautiful prospects. In clear weather, the spectator had from them a view of the Mediterranean sea, of Arabia, and of the whole extent of the Jewish dominions. Besides this, there were three other towers of great magnitude, named Hippocos, Phasael, and Mariamne. The two former, famed for their strength and grandeur, were near ninety cubits high; the latter, for its valuable curiosities, beauty, and elegance, was about fifty-five

cubits. They were **all** built of white marble; and so exquisite was the workmanship, that each of them appeared as if it had been hewn out of an immense single block of it. Notwithstanding their great elevation, they yet must have appeared, from the surrounding country, far loftier than they really were. The old wall, it has just been remarked, was built upon a high rock: but these towers were erected on the *top* of a hill, the summit of which was itself thirty cubits above the *top* of the old wall! Such edifices, so situated, it is easy to conceive, must have given to the city a very great degree of grandeur and magnificence. Not far distant from these towers stood the royal palace, of singular beauty and elegance. Its pillars, its porticoes, its galleries, its apartments, were all incredibly costly, splendid, and superb; while the groves, gardens, walks, fountains, and aqueducts, **with** which it was encompassed, formed the richest and most delightful scenery

that can possibly be imagined. The situation of these structures was on the north side of Jerusalem, Its celebrated temple, and the strong fort of **Antonia**, were on the east side, and directly opposite to the Mount of Olives. This fort was built on a rock fifty cubits in height, and so steep as to be inaccessible on every side ; and to render it still more so, it was faced with thin slabs of marble, which, being slippery, proved at once a defence and an ornament. In the midst of the fort stood the castle of Antonia, the interior parts of which, for grandeur, state, and convenience, resembled more a palace than a fortress. Viewed from a distance, it had the appearance of a tower, encompassed by four other towers, situated at the four angles of a square. Of these latter, three were fifty cubits high, and the fourth seventy cubits.

The tower last mentioned commanded an excellent view of the whole temple, the

riches, grandeur, and elegance of which, it is not in the power of language to describe. Whether we consider its architecture, its dimensions, its magnificence, its splendour, or the sacred purposes to which it was dedicated, it must equally be regarded as the most astonishing fabric that was ever constructed. It was erected partly on a solid rock, which was originally steep on every side. The foundations of what was called the lower temple were three hundred cubits in depth, and the stones of which they were composed, more than sixty feet in length, while the superstructure contained, of the whitest marble, stones nearly sixty-eight feet long, more than seven feet high, and nine broad. The circuit of the whole building was four **furlongs**; its height one hundred cubits; one hundred and sixty pillars, each twenty-seven feet high, ornamented and sustained the immense and **ponderous** edifice. In the front, spacious and lofty galleries, wainscotted with **ce-**

dar, were supported by columns of white marble, in uniform rows. In short, says Josephus, nothing could surpass even the exterior of this temple, for its elegant and curious workmanship. It was adorned with solid plates of gold that rivalled the beauty of the rising sun, and were scarcely less dazzling to the eye than the beams of that luminary. Of those parts of the building which were not gilt, when viewed from a distance, some, says he, appeared like *pillars of snow*, and some like *mountains of white marble*. The splendour of the interior parts of the temple, corresponded with its external magnificence. It was decorated and enriched by every thing that was costly, elegant, and superb. Religious donations and offerings had poured into this wonderful repository of precious stores from every part of the world, during many successive ages. In the lower temple was placed those sacred curiosities, the seven-branched candlestick of pure gold, the table for the shew-bread, and

the altar of incense; the two latter of which were covered over with plates of the same metal. In the sanctuary were several doors, fifty-five cubits high, and sixteen in breadth, which were all **likewise** of gold. Before these doors hung a veil of the most beautiful Babylonian tapestry, composed of scarlet, blue, and purple, exquisitely interwoven, and wrought up to the highest degree of art. From the top of the ceiling depended branches and leaves of vines, and large clusters of grapes hanging down five or six feet, all of gold, and of most admirable workmanship. In addition to these proofs of the splendour and riches of the temple, may be noticed its eastern gate of pure Corinthian brass, more esteemed even than the precious metals—the golden folding-doors of the chambers—the beautiful carved work, gilding, and painting of the galleries—the golden vessels, &c. of the sanctuary, the sacerdotal vestments of scarlet, violet, and purple—the vast wealth of the treasury—

abundance of precious stones, and immense quantities of all kinds of costly spices and perfumes, In short, the most valuable and sumptuous of whatever nature, or art, or opulence could supply, was enclosed within the consecrated walls of this magnificent and venerable edifice.

So much concerning this celebrated city, and its still more celebrated temple. We shall now consider our Lord's prophecies relating to their destruction.

On the Monday immediately preceding his crucifixion, our blessed Saviour made his public and triumphant entry into Jerusalem, amidst the acclamations of a very great multitude of his disciples, who hailed him *King of Sion*, and with palm branches, the emblems of victory, in their hands, rejoiced and gave praises to God for all the mighty works that- they had seen, singing "*Hosannah! blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the*



*Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest !”* But while the people thus exulted and triumphantly congratulated their Messiah, he, struggling with the deepest emotions of pity and compassion for Jerusalem, beheld the city and wept over it, saying, “*If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace ! but now they are hid from thine eyes ; for the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side; and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee: and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another ; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation\*.*”

On the Wednesday following, being only two days before his death, he went for the last time into the temple to teach the people ; while he was thus employed, the High Priests and the Elders, the Herodians, Saducees, and Pharisees, succes-

\* Luke, ~~xix.~~ 42—44.

sively came to him, and questioned him with subtilty, being desirous to "*entangle him in his talk;*" to whom, with his accustomed dignity and wisdom, he returned answers which carried conviction to their hearts, and at once silenced and astonished them. Then, turning to his disciples, and the whole multitude, he addressed to them a discourse of very uncommon energy, in which, with most exquisite keenness of reproof, he exposed and condemned the cruelty and pride, the hypocrisy and sensuality of the Pharisees and Scribes. Having next foretold the barbarous treatment which his apostles would receive at their hands, he proceeded to denounce against Jerusalem the dire and heavy vengeance, that had for ages been accumulating in the vials of divine displeasure, expressly declaring, that it should be poured out upon the *then existing generation*, adding that inimitably tender and pathetic apostrophe to this devoted city, "*O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem!*"

*thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often xvould I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gatherethher chickens under her wings, and ye xvould **not** ! Behold! your house is left unto you **desolate** ; for I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that **cometh** in the name of the Lord\* /"*

Having said this, he went out of the temple, and, as he departed, his disciples drew his attention to the wonderful magnitude and splendour of the edifice. They spake, "*how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts ;*" and said unto him, " Master, see what manner of stones and buildings are here ! And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things ? Verily, I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone •upon another, that shall not be thrown down." When we consider the antiquity and sanctity of the temple, its stupendous fabric, its solidity, and the uncommon

\* Mat. xxiii. 37—39.

magnitude of the stones of which it was composed, we may, in some measure, conceive of the amazement which this declaration of our Lord must have excited in the minds of his disciples. Nevertheless, this remarkable prediction, as we shall see in ~~the~~ sequel, was *literally* fulfilled, and as our Lord had foretold, even during the existence of the generation to which he addressed it.

Our Lord now retired to the Mount of Olives, to which place the disciples followed him, in order to make more particular inquiries relative to the time when the calamitous events, foretold by him, would come to pass. We have already intimated, that the Mount of Olives ~~commanded~~ a full view of Jerusalem and the temple. No situation, therefore, could have been better adapted to ~~give~~ energy to a prediction which related chiefly to ~~their~~ total ruin and demolition ; and if we suppose (and the supposition is highly

probable) that our Lord, while in the act of speaking, pointed to the majestic and stupendous edifices, whose destruction he foretold, every word which he then uttered must have been clothed with inexpressible sublimity, and derived, from the circumstances of the surrounding scenery, a force and effect, which it is not possible adequately to conceive.

“ *Tell us, xvhen shall these things be? and what shall be the sign xvhen all ~~these~~ things shall be fulfilled ?*” Such were the questions of the disciples, in answer to which our Lord condescended to give them a particular account of the several important events that would precede, as well as of the prognostics which would announce the approaching desolations • including suitable directions for the regulation of their conduct under the various trials to which they were to be exposed. He commences with a **caution**: “ *Take heed,*” says he, “ *that no man ~~deceive~~ you;*

*for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many."* The necessity for this friendly warning soon **appeared**; for within one year after our Lord's ascension, rose Dositheus, the Samaritan, who had the boldness to assert that he was the **Messiah**, of whom Moses **prophesied**; while his disciple, Simon Magus, deluded multitudes into a belief that he himself was the *great power of God*. About three years afterwards, another Samaritan impostor appeared, and declared that he would show the people the sacred **utensils**, said to have been deposited by Moses in Mount Gerizim. Induced by an idea that the Messiah, their great deliverer, was now come, an armed multitude assembled under **him**; but Pilate speedily defeated them, and slew their chief. While Cuspius Fadus was procurator in **Judea**, another deceiver arose, whose name was Theudas\*. This man actually succeeded so far as to persuade

\* This is not the Theudas mentioned by Gamaliel, Acts, v. 36.

a very great multitude to take their effects and follow him to **Jordan**, assuring them, that the river would divide at his command. Fadus, however, pursued them, with a troop of horse, and slew many of them, and, among the rest, the impostor himself, whose head was cut off, and carried to Jerusalem. Under the government of Felix, deceivers rose up daily in Judea, and **persuaded** the people to follow them into the wilderness, assuring them that they should there behold conspicuous signs and wonders performed by the Almighty. Of these, Felix, from time to time, apprehended many, and put them to death. About this period (A. D. 55), arose Felix, the celebrated Egyptian impostor, who collected thirty thousand followers, and persuaded them to accompany him to the Mount of Olives, telling them that from thence they should see the walls of Jerusalem fall down at his command, as a prelude to the capture of the Roman garrison, and to their obtaining

the sovereignty of the city. The Roman governor, however, apprehending this to be the beginning of revolt, immediately attacked them, slew four hundred of them, and dispersed the **rest**; but the Egyptian effected his escape. In the time of Porcius Festus (A. D. 60), another **distin-**guished impostor seduced the people, by promising them deliverance from the **Ro-**man yoke, if they would follow him into the **wilderness**; but **Festus** sent out an armed force, which speedily destroyed both the deceiver and his followers. In short, impostors, pretending to a divine commission, continually and fatally deceived the people, and at once justified the caution, and **fulfilled** the prediction of our Lord,

If it be objected, that none of these impostors, except Dositheus, assumed the name of Messiah, we reply, that the grovelling expectation of the Jews was directed to a Messiah who should merely **deli-**



ver them from the Roman yoke, and “*re-store the kingdom to Jerusalem;*” and such were the pretensions of these deceivers. This expectation, indeed, is the only true solution of these strange and repeated insurrections; which will naturally remind the reader of the following-**prophetic-expressions** of our Lord : “ *I am come **in** my Father's name, and **ye** receive me **not** ; if another shall come in his own name, him ye **will** receive.* ” “ *If they shall say unto you, behold, he is 'in the desert, go not forth. They **will** show\* {or pretend to show) great signs and wonders,* ” &c.

Our Saviour thus proceeded: “ *And ye shall hear of wars, and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet, for nation shall rise up against na-*

\* The original word signifies “ **give ;**” and that, in Scripture language, there is a clear distinction betwixt *giving a sign* and the *sign itself*, is sufficiently proved by Deut. xiii. 1, 2.

*tion, and kingdom against kingdom, and great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and **pestilences** : all these are the beginning of sorrow's\*."*

" Wars and rumours of xvars," &c. These commotions, like distant thunder, that forebodes the approaching storm,

" At first heard solemn o'er the verge of heaven," were so frequent from the death of our Lord until the destruction of Jerusalem, that the whole interval might, with propriety, be appealed to in illustration of this prophecy. One hundred and fifty of the copious pages of Josephus, which contain the history of this period, are every where stained with blood. To particularize in a few instances : About three years after the death of Christ, a war broke out between Herod and Aretas, king of Arabia **Petræa**, in which the army of the former was cut off. This was "*kingdom rising against kingdom.*" Wars are usually pre-

ceded by rumours. It may, therefore, appear absurd to attempt a distinct elucidation of this part of the prophecy ; nevertheless, it ought not to be omitted, that about this time the emperor Caligula, having ordered his statue to be placed in the temple of Jerusalem, and the Jews having persisted to refuse him, the whole nation were so much alarmed, by the mere apprehension of war, that they neglected even to till their lands ! The storm, however, blew over.

About this period, a great number of Jews, on account of a pestilence which rased at Babvlon, removed from that city to Selucia, where the Greeks and Syrians rose against them, and destroyed of this devoted people more than five myriads ! “The extent of this slaughter,” says Josephus, “had no parallel in any former period of their history.” Again, about five years after this dreadful massacre, there happened a severe contest between

the Jews at Perea and the Philadelphians, respecting the limits of a cit} called Mia, in which many of the former were slain. This was "*nation rising up against nation.*" Four years afterwards, under Cumanus, an indignity was offered to the Jews within the precincts of the temple, by a Roman soldier, Which they violently resented ; but upon the approach of the Romans in great force, their terror was so excessive, and so disorderly and precipitate their flight, that not less than ten thousand Jews were trodden to death in the streets. This, again, was "*nation rising up against nation.*" Four years more had not elapsed, before the Jews made war against the Samaritans, and ravaged their country. The people of Samaria had murdered a Galilean, who was going up to Jerusalem to keep the passover, and the Jews thus revenged it. At **Cæsarea**, the Jews having had a sharp contention with the Syrians for the government of the city, an appeal was

made to Nero, who decreed it to the Syrians. This event laid the foundation of a most cruel and sanguinary contest between the two nations. The Jews, mortified *by* disappointment, and inflamed by jealousy, rose against the Syrians, who successfully repelled them. In the city of **Cæ**sarea alone, upwards of twenty thousand Jews were slain. The flame, however, was not now **quenched** ; it spread its destructive rage wherever the Jews and Syrians dwelt together in the same **place** : through out every city, town, and village, mutual animosity and slaughter prevailed. At Damascus, Tyre, Ascalon, Gadara, and Scythopolis, the carnage was dreadful. At the first of these cities ten thousand Jews were slain in one hour, and at Scythopolis thirteen thousand treacherously in one night. At Alexandria, the Jews, aggrieved by the oppressions of the Romans, rose against them ; but the Romans, gaining the ascendancy, slew of that nation fifty thousand persons, sparing neither infants

nor the aged. And after this, at the siege of Jotapata, not less than forty thousand Jews perished. While these destructive contests prevailed in the East, the western parts of the Roman empire were rent by the fierce contentions of Galba, Otho, and Vitellius; of which three emperors it is remarkable, that they all, together with Nero, their immediate predecessor, died a violent death, within the short space of eighteen months. Finally, the whole nation of the Jews took up arms against the Romans, king Agrippa, &c. and provoked that dreadful war which, in a few years, deluged Judea with blood, and laid its capital in ruins.

If it be here objected, that, because wars are events of frequent occurrence, it would be improper to refer to supernatural foresight a successful prediction respecting them, it is replied, that much of this objection will be removed, by considering the incompetency of even statesmen them-

selves to foretell the condition, only for a few years, of the very nation whose affairs they administer. It is a well-known fact, that the present minister of Great Britain, on the very eve of the late long and destructive war with the French Republic, held out to his country a picture of fifteen successive years of peace and prosperity. Indeed, the nice points on which peace and war often depend, baffle all calculations from present aspects; and a rumour of war, so loud and so alarming as even to suspend the operations of husbandry, may terminate, as we have just seen, in nothing but rumour. Further, let it be considered, that the wars to which this part of our Lord's prophecy referred, were to be of two kinds, and that the event corresponded accordingly; that they occurred within the period to which he had assigned **them**; that they fell with the most destructive severity on the **Jews**; to whom the prophecy at large chiefly related, and that the person who predicted them was

not in the condition of a statesman, but in that of a carpenter's son ! On this subject more in another place.

*"And great earthquakes shall be in divers places."* Of these significant emblems of political commotions, there occurred several within the scene of this prophecy, and, as our Saviour predicted, in divers places. In the reign of Claudius, there was **one** at Rome, and another at **Apamea**, in Syria, where many of the Jews resided. The earthquake at the latter place was so destructive, that the emperor, in order to relieve the distresses of the inhabitants, remitted its tribute for five years. Both these earthquakes are recorded by Tacitus. There was one also, in the same reign, in Crete. This is mentioned by **Philostratus**, in his life of Apollonius, who says, that **there were** others "at Smyrna, Miletus, Chios, and **Samos**; in all which places Jews had settled." In the reign of Nero there was an **earthquake**



at Laodicea. Tacitus records this also. It is likewise mentioned by Eusebius and Orosius, who add, that Hierapolis and Colosse, as well as Laodicea, were overthrown by an earthquake. There was also one in Campania in this reign (of this both Tacitus and Seneca speak); and another at Rome in the reign of Galba, recorded by Suetonius; to all which may be added those which happened on that dreadful night when the Idumeans were excluded from Jerusalem, a short time before the siege commenced. "A heavy storm (says Josephus) burst on them during the night; violent winds arose, accompanied with the most excessive rains, with constant lightnings, most tremendous thundering s, and with dreadful roarings of earthquakes. It seemed (continues he) as if the system of the World had been confounded for the destruction of mankind; and one might well conjecture that these were signs of no common events!"

Our Lord predicted "*famines*" also. Of these the principal was that which Agabus foretold would happen in the days of Claudius, as **related** in the Acts of the Apostles. It began in the fourth year of his reign, and was of long continuance. It extended through Greece, and even into Italy, but was felt most severely in Judea, and especially at Jerusalem, where many perished for want of bread. This famine is recorded by Josephus also, who relates that an assaron of corn was sold for 5 drachmae (i. e. about 3 pints and a half for 3s. 3d.). It is likewise noticed by Eusebius and Orosius. To alleviate this terrible calamity, Helena, queen of **Adiabena**, who was at that time in Jerusalem, ordered large supplies of grain to be sent from **Alexandria**; and Izates, her son, consigned vast sums to the governors of Jerusalem, to be applied to the relief of the more indigent sufferers. The Gentile christian converts residing in foreign countries, also sent, at the instance of St.

Paul, liberal contributions to relieve the distresses of their Jewish brethren\*. Dion Cassius relates that there was likewise a famine in the first year of Claudius, which prevailed at Rome, and in other parts of **Italy**; and, in the eleventh year of the same emperor, there was another, mentioned by Eusebius. To these ~~may~~ be added those that afflicted the inhabitants of several of the cities of Galilee and Judea, which were besieged and taken, previously to the investment of Jerusalem, where the climax of national misery, arising from this and every other cause, was so awfully completed.

Our Saviour adds "*pestilences*" likewise. Pestilence treads upon the heels of famine; it may therefore reasonably be presumed, that this terrible scourge accompanied the famines which had just been enumerated. History, however, particularly distinguishes two instances of

\* 1 Corin. xvi. 3.

this calamity, which occurred before the commencement of the Jewish war. The first took place at Babylon, about A. D. 40, and raged so alarmingly, that great multitudes of Jews fled from that city to Seleucia for safety, as hath been hinted already. The other happened at Rome, A. D. 65, and carried off prodigious multitudes. Both Tacitus and Suetonius also record, that similar calamities prevailed, during this period, in various other parts of the Roman empire. After Jerusalem was surrounded by the army of Titus, pestilential diseases soon made their appearance there, to aggravate the miseries, and deepen the horrors of the siege. They were partly occasioned by the immense multitudes which were crowded together in the city, partly by the putrid effluvia which arose from the unburied dead, and partly from the prevalence of the famine.

Our Lord proceeded: “ *And fearful sights and great signs shall there be from*

*heaven*\*.”—Josephus has collected the chief of these portents together, and introduces his account by a reflection on the strangeness of that infatuation, which could induce his countrymen to give credit to impostors, and unfounded reports, whilst they disregarded the divine admonitions, confirmed, as he asserts they were, by the following extraordinary signs :

1. "A meteor, resembling a sword, hung over Jerusalem during one whole year." This could not be a comet, for it was stationary, and was visible for twelve successive months. A sword, too, though a fit emblem of destruction, but ill represents a comet.

2. "On the eighth of the month Zanthicus (before the feast of unleavened bread), at the ninth hour of the night, there shone round about the altar, and the circumjacent buildings of the temple, a light equal

\* Luke xxi. 11.

† Vide 1 Chron. xxi. 16.

to the brightness of the day, which continued for the space of half an hour." This could not be the effect of lightning, nor of a vivid *aurora borealis*, for it was confined to a particular spot, and the light shone **un-**intermittedly thirty minutes.

3. "As the High Priests were leading a heifer to the altar to be sacrificed, she brought forth a lamb, in the midst of the temple." Such is the strange account given by the historian. Some may regard it as "a Grecian **fable**;" while others may think that they discern in this prodigy a miraculous rebuke of Jewish **in-**fidelity and impiety, for rejecting that antitypical Lamb, who had offered Himself as an atonement, "**once for all**;" and who, by thus completely fulfilling their design, had virtually abrogated the **Levitical** sacrifices. However this may be, the circumstances of the prodigy are remarkable. It did not occur in an obscure part of the city, but in the **temple**; not at an

**ordinary time, but at the Passover, the season of our Lord's crucifixion—in the presence, not of the vulgar merely, but of the High Priests and their attendants, and when they were leading the sacrifice to the altar.**

4. “About the sixth hour of the night, the eastern gate of the temple was seen to open without human assistance.” When the guards informed the curator of this event, he sent men to assist them in shutting it, who with great difficulty succeeded. This gate, as hath been observed already, was of solid brass, and required twenty men to close it every evening. It could not have been opened by a “strong gust of wind,” or a “slight earthquake ;” for Josephus says, “it was secured by iron bolts and bars, which were let down into a large threshold, consisting of one entire stone\*.”

\* The conclusion which the Jews drew from this event was, that the security of the temple was gone.

5. "Soon after the feast of the **Pass-**over, in various parts of the country, before the setting of the sun, chariots and armed men were seen in the air, passing round about Jerusalem." Neither could this portentous spectacle be occasioned by the *aurora borealis*, for it occurred before the setting of the sun ; or merely the fancy of a few villagers, gazing at the heavens, for it was seen in various parts of the country.

6. "At the subsequent feast of Pentecost, while the priests were going, by night, into the inner temple to perform their customary ministrations, they first felt, as they, said, a shaking, accompanied by an indistinct murmuring, and afterwards voices as of a multitude, saying, in a distinct and earnest **manner**,—' Let us depart hence'." This gradation will remind the reader of that awful transaction, which the feast of Pentecost was **princi**pally instituted to commemorate. First,



a shaking was heard; this would naturally induce the priests to listen; an intelligible murmuring succeeds; this would more powerfully arrest their attention—and while it was thus awakened and fixed, they heard, says Josephus, the voices, as of a multitude, distinctly pronouncing the Words "Let us depart hence." And accordingly, before the period for celebrating this feast returned, the Jewish war had commenced, and in the space of three years afterwards, Jerusalem was surrounded by the Roman army, the temple converted into a citadel, and its sacred courts streaming with the blood of human victims.

7. As the last and most fearful omen, Josephus relates that one Jesus, the son of Ananus, a rustic of the lower class, during the feast of tabernacles, suddenly exclaimed in the temple, "A voice from the east—a voice from the west—a voice from the four winds—a voice against Jerusalem and

the temple—a voice against bridegrooms and brides—a voice against the whole people!" These words he incessantly proclaimed aloud both day and night, through all the streets of Jerusalem, for seven years and five months together, commencing at a time (A. D. 62) when the city was in a state of peace and overflowing with prosperity, and terminating amidst the horrors of the siege. This disturber, having excited the attention of the magistracy, was brought before **Albinus**, the Roman governor, who commanded that he should be scourged. But the severest stripes drew from him neither tears nor supplications. As he never thanked those who relieved, so neither did he complain of the injustice of those who struck him. And no other answer could the governor obtain to his interrogatories, but his usual denunciation of "Wo, wo to Jerusalem!" which he still continued to proclaim through the city, but especially during the festivals, when his **man-**

ner became more earnest, and the tone of his voice louder. At length, on the commencement of the siege, he ascended the walls, and, in a more powerful voice than ever, exclaimed, "Wo,, wo to this city, this temple, and this people!" And then, with a presentiment of his own death, added, "Wo, wo to myself!" He had scarcely uttered these words, when a stone' from one of the Roman engines killed him on the spot.

Such are the prodigies related by Josephus, and which, excepting the first, he places in the year immediately preceding the Jewish war. Several of them are recorded also by Tacitus. Nevertheless, it ought to be observed, that they are received by christian writers cautiously, and with various degrees of credit. Those, however, who are most sceptical, and who resolve them into natural causes, allow the "superintendence of God to awaken his people by some of these

means." Whatever the fact, in this respect, may be, it is clear that they corresponded to our Lord's prediction of "*fearful sights, and great signs from heaven;*" and ought to be deemed a sufficient answer to the objector, who demands, whether any such appearances are respectably recorded.

The next prediction of our Lord related to the persecutions of his disciples: "*They shall lay their hands on you,*" said he, "*and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake\*;*" "*and they shall deliver you up to councils, and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten†;*" "*and some of you shall they cause to be put to death‡.*"

In the very infancy of the christian church, these unmerited and unprovoked cruelties began to be inflicted. Our Lord, and his forerunner John the Baptist, had already

\* Luke xxi. 12.      \* Mark xiii. 9.      % Luke xxi. 16.

been put to death ; the apostles Peter and John were first imprisoned, and then, together with the other apostles, were scourged before the Jewish **council** ; Stephen, after confounding the Sanhedrim with his irresistible eloquence, was stoned to death ; Herod Agrippa " *stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church*" beheaded James the brother of John, and again imprisoned Peter, designing to put him to death **also** ; St. Paul pleaded before the Jewish council at Jerusalem, and before Felix, the Roman governor, who trembled on the **judgment-seat**, while the intrepid prisoner " *reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come!*" Two years afterwards, he was brought before the tribunal of Festus (who had succeeded Felix in the government), king Agrippa the younger being present, who, while the governor scoffed, ingenuously acknowledged the force of the apostle's eloquence, and, half convinced, exclaimed, " *Almost thou persuadest me to be a*

*christian."* Lastly, he pleaded before the emperor Nero at **Rome**; he was also brought with Silas before the rulers at Philippi, where both of them were scourged and imprisoned. Paul was likewise imprisoned two years in Judea, and afterwards twice at Rome, each time for the space of two years. He was scourged by the Jews five times, thrice beaten with rods, and once stoned; nay, he himself, before his conversion, was an instrument of fulfilling these predictions. St. Luke relates of him, that "*he made havoc of the church, entering into every house. and hal-ling men and women, committed them to prison ; when they xvere put to death, he gave his voice gainst them ; he punished them oft in every synagogue, and persecuted them even into strange cities;*" and to this agree his own declarations\*. At length, about two years before the Jewish war, the first general persecution commenced at the instigation of the emperor Nero, " who,"

\* Vide Acts xxvi. 10, 11. Gal. i. 23.

says Tacitus, " inflicted upon the christians, punishments exquisitely painful;" multitudes suffered a cruel martyrdom, amidst derision and insults, and among the rest the venerable apostles St. Peter and St. Paul.

Our Lord continues—" *And ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake\**." The hatred from which the above recited persecutions sprang, was not provoked on the part of the christians, by a contumacious resistance to established authority, or by any violations of law, but was the unavoidable consequence of their sustaining the name, and imitating the example of their Master. " It was a war," says Tertullian, " against the very name ; to be a christian was of itself crime enough." And to the same effect is that expression of Pliny in his letter to **Trajan** ; " I asked them whether they were **christians** ; if they confessed it, I asked them a second

\* Mat. **xxiv.** 9.

and a third time, threatening them with punishment, and those who persevered I commanded to be led away to death.—It is added, " *Of all nations.*" Whatever animosity or dissensions might subsist between the Gentiles and the Jews on other points, they were at all times ready to unite and to co-operate in the persecution of the humble followers of Him, who came to be a light to the former, and the glory of the latter. ..

" *And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another\*.*" Concerning this fact, the following decisive testimony of Tacitus may suffice : speaking of the persecutions of the christians under Nero, to which we have just alluded, he adds, "several were seized, who confessed, and by their discovery a great multitude of others were convicted and barbarously executed."

\* Matt. xxiv. 10.



*“And the Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then **shall** the end (i. e. of the Jewish dispensation) come\*.”*

—Of the fulfilment of this prediction, the Epistles of St. Paul, addressed to the christians at Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Phillippi, Cofosse, Thessalonica, and those of Peter, to such as resided in Pontus, Cappadocia, and Bythynia, are monuments now standing; for neither of these Apostles were living when the Jewish war commenced. St. Paul too, in his Epistle to the Romans, informs them that *“their faith was spoken of throughout the world;”* and in that to the Colossians he observes, that the “Gospel had been preached to every creature under heaven.” Clement, who was a fellow-labourer with the Apostle, relates of him that “he taught the whole world righteousness, travelling from the east westward to the borders of the ocean.” Eusebius says

\***Mat.** xxiv. 14.

that "the Apostles preached the Gospel in all the world, and that some of them passed beyond the bounds of the ocean, and visited the Britannic isles\* :" so says Theodoret also.

" It appears," says Bishop Newton, " from the writers of the history of the church, that before the destruction of Jerusalem, the Gospel was not only preached in the Lesser Asia, and Greece, and Italy, the great theatres of action then in the world, but was likewise propagated as far northward as Scythia, as far southward as Ethiopia, as far eastward as Parthia and India, as far westward as Spain and Britain." And Tacitus asserts, that " the christian religion, which arose in Judea, spread over many parts of the world, and

\* It is admitted that the phrases "all the world," " every creature," &c. are hyperbolical ; but then, taken in their connexion, they evidently import the universality of the preaching and spread of the Gospel, previously to the destruction of Jerusalem, which was the point to be proved.

extended to Rome itseff, where the professors of it, as **early** as the time of Nero, amounted to a vast **multi rude**," insomuch that their numbers excited the **jealousy** of the government.

Thus compfetefy was fulfilled a prediction contrary to every **conclusion** that could have been grounded on **moral** probability, and to the accomplishment of which every kind of impediment was incessantly opposed. The reputed son of a mechanic instructs a few **simple** fishermen in a new **religion**, destitute of **worldly** incentives, but **full** of **self-denials**, sacrifices, and sufferings, and tells them that in about forty years it should spread over all the world. It spreads accordingly; and, in defiance of the exasperated bigotry of the Jews, and of all the authority, power, and active opposition of the Gentiles, is established, within that period, in all the countries into which it penetrates. Can any one

doubt but that the prediction and its fulfilment were equally divine ?

Such, briefly, is the account that history gives of the" several events and signs, which our Lord had foretold would precede the destruction of the Holy City. No sooner were his predictions accomplished, than a most unaccountable infatuation seized upon the whole Jewish nation ; so that they not only provoked, but seemed even to rush into the midst of those unparalled calamities, which at length totally overwhelmed them. In an essay of this sort it is impossible to enter into a minute detail of the origin and progress of these evils ; but such particulars as illustrate the fulfilment of the remaining part of the prophecy, and justify the strong language in which it is couched, shall be presented to the reader.

From the conquest of their country by Pompey, about 60 years B.C. the Jews

had, on **several** occasions, manifested a refractory spirit; but after Judas the **Gaulonite** and Sadduc the Pharisee had taught them, that submission to the Roman assessments **would** pave the way to a state of abject slavery, this temper displayed itself with increasing malignity and violence. Rebellious tumults and insurrections became more and more frequent and alarming; and to these the mercenary exactions of Florus, the Roman governor, not a little contributed. At length **Eleazer**, son of the high priest, persuaded those who officiated in the **temple** to reject the sacrifices of foreigners, and no longer to offer up prayers for them. Thus an **insult** was thrown upon Caesar, his sacrifice rejected, and the foundation of the Roman war **laid**. The disturbances **among** the Jews still continuing, Cestius **Gailus**, president of Syria, marched an **army** into Judea, in order to **quell** them, \* and his career was every where marked with blood and desolation. As he **proceeded**, he **plun-**

dered and burnt the beautiful city of **Zabulon**, Joppa, and all the villages which lay in his way. At Joppa, he slew of the inhabitants eight thousand four hundred. He laid waste the district of **Narbatene**; and, sending an army into **Galilee**, slew there two thousand of the seditious Jews. He then burnt the city of **Lydda**; and after having, **repulsed** the Jews, who made a desperate sally upon him, encamped at length at the distance of about one mile from **Jerusalem**. On the fourth day he entered its gates, and burnt three divisions of the city, and might now, by its capture, have put a period to the war; but through the treacherous persuasions of his officers, instead of pursuing his advantages, he most unaccountably raised the siege, and fled from the city with the utmost precipitation. The Jews, however, pursued him as far as **Antipatris**, and, with little loss to themselves, slew of his army nearly six thousand men. After this disaster had befallen Cestius, the more

opulent of the Jews, says Josephus, forsook Jerusalem as men do a sinking ship. And it is with reason supposed, that on this occasion many of the Christians, or converted Jews, who dwelt there, recollecting the warnings of their divine Master, retired to **Pella**, a place beyond Jordan, situated in a mountainous country\*, whither (according to Eusebius, who resided near the spot) they came from Jerusalem, and settled, before the war under Vespasian began. Other providential opportunities for escaping afterwards occurred, of which, it is **probable**, those who were now left behind availed themselves; for it is a striking fact, and as such cannot be contempfated by the pious mind •without sentiments of devout admiration, that history does not record that even one christian perished in the siege of Jerusalem. Enduring to the end faithfuf to their

• Such was our Lord's **admonition**: "*Let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains,*" &c. Vide Mat. xxiv. 16—22.

blessed Master, they gave full credit to his predictions, and escaped the calamity. Thus were fulfilled the words of our Lord, "*He that shall endure unto the end* (i. e. of ~~the~~ scene of this prophecy) *shall be saved\**," i. e. from the calamities which will involve all those who shall continue obstinate in unbelief.

Nero, having been informed of the defeat of Cestius, immediately appointed Vespasian, a man of tried valour, to prosecute the war against the Jews, who, assisted by his son Titus, soon collected at Ptolemais an army of sixty thousand men. From hence, in the spring of 67 A. D. he marched into Judea, every where spreading the most cruel havoc and devastation : the Roman soldiers, on various occasions, sparing neither infants nor the aged. For fifteen months Vespasian proceeded in this sanguinary career, during which period he reduced all the strong towns of

\* Mat. xxiv. 13.



Galilee, and the chief of those in Judea, destroying at least one hundred and fifty thousand of the inhabitants. Among the **terrible\*** calamities which at this time happened to the Jews, those which **befel** them **at Joppa**, which had been rebuilt, deserve particular notice. Their frequent piracies had provoked the vengeance of Vespasian. ' The Jews fled before his army to their **ships**; but a tempest **immediately** arose, and pursued such as stood out to sea, and **overset them**, while the rest were dashed vessel against vessel, and against the rocks, in the most tremendous manner. In this perplexity some were drowned, some were crushed by the broken ships, others killed themselves, and **such** as reached the shore were slain **by** the merciless Romans. The sea for a long space was stained with **blood**; four thousand two hundred dead bodies were strewed along the coast, and, dreadful to relate, not an individual survived to report this great calamity at Jerusalem. Such events were foretold by our Lord, when

he said, *There shall be distress of nations, xvith **perplexity** the sea and the waves roaring\**—

Vespasian, after proceeding as far as Jericho, returned to Caesarea, in order to make preparations for his grand attempt against Jerusalem. While he was **thus** employed, he received intelligence of **the** death of Nero; **whereupon**, not knowing what the will of the future emperor **might** be, he prudently resolved to suspend, for **the present**, the execution of his design. Thus the Almighty gave the Jews a second respite, which **continued** nearly two years; but they repented not of their crimes, neither were they in\* the least degree • reclaimed, but rather proceeded to acts of still greater enormity. The flame of civil dissention again burst out, and with more dreadful fury. In the heart of Jerusalem **two** factions, contending for the sovereignty, raged against each other with

\* Luke xxi. 35.

rancorous and destructive animosity. A division of one of these factions having been excluded from the city (*vide* page 34), **forcibly** entered it during the night. Athirst for blood, and inflamed by revenge, they spared neither age, sex, nor infancy ; and the morning sun beheld "eight thousand five hundred dead bodies **lying** in the streets of the holy city. They plundered every house, and having found the chief priests, Ananus and Jesus, not only slew them, but, insulting their bodies, cast them forth unburied. They slaughtered the common people **as** unfeelingly as if they had been a herd of the vilest beasts. The nobles they first imprisoned, then scourged, and when they could not by these means attach them to their party, they bestowed death upon them as a favour. Of the higher **classes** 'twelve thousand perished' in this manner; nor did any one dare to shed a tear, or utter a groan, **openly**, through fear of a similar fate. Death, **indeed**, was the penalty

of the tightest and heaviest accusation, nor did any escape through the meanness of their birth, or their poverty. Such as fled were intercepted and slain: their carcasses lay in heaps on all the public roads: every symptom of pity seemed utterly extinguished, and with it all respect for authority, both human and divine.

While Jerusalem was a prey to these ferocious and devouring factions, every part of Judea was scourged and laid Waste by bands of robbers and murderers, who plundered the towns, and, in case of ~~of~~ resistance, slew the inhabitants, not sparing either women or **children**. Simon, son of Gioras, the commander of one of these bands, at the head of forty thousand banditti, having with some difficulty entered Jerusafem, gave birth to a third faction, and the flame of civil discord blazed out again, with still more destructive fury. The three factions, rendered frantic by drunkenness, rage, and desperation, tramp.

ling on heaps of slain, fought against each other with brutal savageness and madness. Even such as brought sacrifices to the

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temple were murdered. The dead bodies of priests and worshippers, both natives and foreigners, were heaped together, and a lake of blood stagnated in the sacred courts. John of Gischala, who headed one of the factions, burnt store-houses full of provisions; and Simon, his great antagonist, who headed another of them, soon afterwards followed his example.—Thus they cut the very sinews of their own strength. At this critical and alarming conjuncture, intelligence arrived that the Roman army was approaching the city. The Jews were petrified with astonishment and fear; there was no time for counsel, no hope of pacification, no means of flight:—all was wild disorder and perplexity:—nothing was to be heard but “*the confused noise of the warrior,*” —nothing to be seen but “*garments rolled in blood,*” —nothing to be

expected from the Romans but signal and exemplary vengeance. A ceaseless cry of combatants was heard day and night, and yet, the lamentations of mourners were still more dreadful. The consternation and terror which now prevailed, induced many of the inhabitants to desire that a foreign foe might come, and effect their deliverance. Such was the horrible condition of the place when Titus and his army presented themselves, and encamped before Jerusalem ; but, alas ! not to deliver it from its miseries, but to fulfil the prediction, and vindicate the benevolent warning of our Lord : " *When ye see (he had said to his disciples) the abomination of desolation, spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place\*, and Jerusalem surrounded by armies (or camps), then let those who are in the midst of Jerusalem depart and let not those xvho are in the country*

\* Not only was the temple and mountain on which it stood accounted *holy*, but also the whole city of Jerusalem, and several furlongs of land round about it. *Vide* Neh. xi. 1 ; Isaiah liii. 1 ; Daniel ix. 24 ; and Mat. xxvii. 53.

*enter into her," for "then know that the desolation thereof is nigh\*."* These armies, we do not hesitate to affirm, were those of the Romans, who now invested the city. From the time of the **Babylonian** captivity, idolatry had been held as an abomination by the Jews. This **national** aversion was manifested even against the images of their gods and emperors, which the Roman armies carried in their standards ; so that, in a time of peace, **Pilate**, and afterwards **Vitellius**, at the request of some eminent Jews, on this account avoided marching their forces through Judea. Of the **desolating** disposition which now governed the Roman army, the history of the Jewish war, and especially the final **demolition** of the holy city, presents an awful and **signal** example. **Jerusalem** was not captured merely, but, with its **celebrated temple**, laid in ruins. Lest, however, the army of **Titus** should not be **sufficiently** designated by this expression, our Lord adds, "*Wheresoever the carcase is, there*

•'Mat. xxiv. **15, 21** ; Luke xxi. 20, 21.

*'will the eagles be gathered together\*.'*

The Jewish state, indeed, at this time, was fitly compared to a carcass. The sceptre of Judah, i. e. its civil and political authority, the life of its religion, and the glory of its temple, were departed. It was, in short, morally and judicially dead. The eagle, whose ruling instinct is **rapine** and murder, as fitly represented the fierce and sanguinary temper of the Romans, and, perhaps, might be intended to refer also to the principal figure on their ensigns, which, however obnoxious to the Jews, were at length planted in the midst of the holy city, and finally on the temple itself.

- The day on which Titus encompassed Jerusalem was the feast of the **passover**; and it is deserving of the very **particular** attention of the reader, that this was the anniversary of that **memorable** period in which the Jews crucified their **Messiah**!

\* Mat. xxiv. 28.



At this season multitudes came up from ail the surrounding country, and from distant parts, to keep the festivaf. How suitable and how kind, ~~then,~~ was the prophetic admonition of our Lord, and how clearly he saw into futurity when he said, "*Let not them that are in the countries enter into Jerusalem\**." Nevertheless, the city was at that time crowded with Jewish strangers, and foreigners from all parts, so that the whole nation may be considered as having been shut up in one prison, preparatory to the execution of the Divine vengeance; and, according to Josephus, this event took place suddenly; thus, not only fulfilling the predictions of our Lord, that these calamities should come like the swift darting lightning " *that cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west,*" and " *as a snare on all them (the Jews) who dwelt upon the face of the xwhole earth\;*" but justifying, also, his friendly direction, that those who fled from the

\* Luke xxi. 22. f Mat. xxiv. 17; and Luke xxi. 31

face should use the utmost possible **expedition**.

On the appearance of the Roman army, the factious Jews united, and, rushing furiously out of the city, **repulsed** the tenth legion, which was with **difficulty** preserved. This event caused a short suspension of hostilities, and, by opening the gates, gave an opportunity to such as were so disposed to make their escape ; which, before this, they **could** not have attempted without interruption, from the suspicion that they wished to **revolt** to the Romans. This success inspired the Jews with confidence, and they **resolved** to defend their city to the very **uttermost**; but **it, did** not prevent the **renewal** of their civil broils. The faction under Eleazer having dispersed, and arranged themselves under **the** two other leaders, John and Simon, there ensued a scene of the most dreadful contention, **plunder**, and **conflagration**: the middle space of the city being burnt, and

the wretched inhabitants made the prize of the contending parties. The Romans at length gained possession of two of the three waifs which defended the city, and fear once more united the factions. This pause to their fury had, however, scarcely begun, when famine made its ghastly appearance in the Jewish army. It had for some time been silently approaching, and many of the peaceful and the poor had already perished for want of necessaries. With this new calamity, strange to relate, the madness of the factions again returned, and the city presented a new picture of wretchedness. Impelled by the cravings of hunger, they snatched the staff of life out of each other's hands, and many devoured the grain unprepared. Tortures were inflicted for the discovery of a handful of meal; women forced food from their husbands, and children from their fathers, and even mothers from their infants; and, while sucking children were wasting away in their arms, they scrupled

not to take away the vital drops which sustained **them** ! So justly did our Lord pronounce a wo on "*them xvho should give suck in those days\**." This dreadful scourge at length drove multitudes of the Jews out of the city into the enemies' camp, where the Romans crucified them in such numbers, that, as Josephus relates, space was wanted for the crosses, and crosses for the captives ; and it having been discovered that some of them had swallowed gold, the Arabs and Syrians, who were incorporated in the Roman army, impelled by avarice, with unexampled cruelty, ripped open two thousand of the deserters in one night. Titus, touched by these calamities, in person entreated the Jews to surrender, but they answered him with revilings. Exasperated by their obstinacy and insolence, he now resolved to surround the city by a circumvallationf, which, with astonishing activity,

\* Mat. xxiv. 19.

† This trench was thirty-nine furlongs in circuit, and strengthened with thirteen towers.

was effected by the soldiers in three days, Thus was fulfilled another of our Lord's predictions, for he had said, while addressing this devoted city, "*Thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round about, and keep thee in on every side*\*." As no supplies whatever could now enter the walls, the famine rapidly extended itself, and, increasing in horror, devoured whole families. The tops of houses and the recesses of the city, were covered with the carcasses of women, children, and aged men. The young men appeared like spectres in the places of public resort, and fell down lifeless in the streets. The dead were too numerous to be interred, and many expired in the performance of this office. The public calamity was too great for lamentation. Silence, and, as it were, a black and deadly night" overspread the city. But even such a scene could not awe the robbers; they spoiled the tombs,

\*Luke six. 43.

and stripped the dead of their grave-clothes, with an unfeeling and wild laughter. They tried the edges of their swords on their carcasses, and even on some that were yet breathing; while Simon Gioras chose this melancholy and awful period to manifest the deep malignity and cruelty of his nature, in the execution of the High Priest Matthias, and his three sons, whom he caused to be condemned as favourers of the Romans. The father, in consideration of his having opened the city gates to Simon, begged that he might be executed previously to his children; but the unfeeling tyrant gave orders that he should be dispatched in the last place, and in his expiring moments insultingly asked him, whether the Romans could then relieve him.

While the city was in this dismal situation, a Jew named **Mannæus** fled to Titus, and informed him, that from the beginning of the siege (**14th April**) to the first

ft}      NUMBER OF DEAD CAST OUT, &c.

of July following, one hundred and fifteen thousand eight hundred and eighty dead bodies had been carried through one gate only, which he had guarded. This man had been appointed to pay the public allowance for carrying the bodies out, and was therefore obliged to register them. Soon after several respectable individuals deserted to the Romans, and assured Titus that the whole number of the poor who had been cast out at the different gates, was not less than six hundred thousand. The report of these calamities excited pity in the Romans, and in a particular manner affected Titus, who, while surveying the immense number of dead bodies which were piled up under the walls, raised his hands towards heaven, and, appealing to the Almighty, solemnly protested that he had not been the cause of these deplorable calamities; which, indeed, the Jews, by their unexampled wickedness, rebellion, and obstinacy, had brought down upon their own heads.

After this, Josephus, in the name of **Ti-  
tus**, earnestly exhorted John and his adhe-  
rents to surrender; but the insolent rebe-  
f returned nothing but reproaches and impre-  
cations, declaring his firm persuasion that  
Jerusaïem, as it was God's own city, could  
never be taken: thus literally fulfilling the  
decfaration of Micah, that the Jews, in  
their extremity, notwithstanding their crimes,  
would presumptuously " *lean upon the  
Lord and say, ' Is not the Lord among us?  
none evil can come upon us'\**."

Meanwhile the horrors of famine grew  
stiff more mefanchofy and afflictive. The  
Jews, for want of food, were at fength  
compelled to eat their belts, their sandals,  
the skins of their shields, dried grass, and  
even the ordure of oxen. In the depth of  
this horrible extremity, a Jewess of noble  
family, urged by the intolerable cravings  
of hunger, slew her infant child, and pre-  
pared it for a meal; and had actually eat.

\* Micah iii. 11.



en one half thereof, when the soldiers, allured by the smell of food, threatened her with instant death if she refused to discover it. Intimidated by this menace, she immediately produced the remains of her son, which petrified them ~~with~~ horror. At the recital of this melancholy and affecting occurrence, the whole city stood aghast, and poured forth ~~tiieir~~ congratulations on those whom death had hurried away from such heart-rending scenes. Indeed, humanity at once shudders and sickens at the narration, nor can any one of the least sensibility reflect upon the pitiable condition to which the female part of the inhabitants of Jerusaïem must at this time have been reduced, without experiencing the tenderest emotions of sympathy, or refrain from tears while he reads our Saviour's pathetic address to the women who "*bewailed him*" as he was led to Calvary, wherein he evidently refers to these very calamities: "*Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but for yourselves and for*

*your children; **fôr**, behold, the days are **coming** in which they shall say, \* Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bear, and the breasts that never gave suck'\*. "*

The above melancholy fact was also literally foretold by **Moses**: " *The tender and delicate **woman** among you (said he, addressing Israel) who would not **venture** to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for **delicateness** and **tenderness**, her eye shall be **evil** . . . toward her young one . . . which she shall bear,*" and " *eat for want of all things, secretly, in the siege and **attractiveness** wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy **gates**†.*" This prediction was partially fulfilled, when Samaria, the capital of the revolted tribes, was besieged by **Benhadad**; and afterwards at Jerusafem, previously to its capture by Nebuchadnezzar; but its exact and literal accomplishment, in relation to

\* Luke xxiii. 29.

† Deut. **xxviii.** 56, 57.

## 16 A SOLDIER SETS FIRE TO THE TEMPLE.

a lady of rank, delicately and voluptuously educated, was reserved for the period of which we are now speaking. And it deserves particular regard, as a circumstance which very greatly enhances the importance of this prophecy, that the history of the world does not record that a parallel instance of unnatural barbarity ever occurred during the siege of any other place, in any other age or nation whatsoever. Indeed, Josephus himself declares that, if there had not been many credible witnesses of the fact, he would not have recorded it, "because," as he remarks, "such a shocking violation of nature never having been perpetrated by any Greek or barbarian," the insertion of it might have diminished the credibility of his history.

While famine continued thus to spread its destructive rage through the city, the Romans, after many ineffectual attempts, at length succeeded in demolishing part of

the inner waif, possessed themselves of the great tower of Antonia, and advanced towards the temple, which Titus, in a council of war, had determined to preserve as an ornament to the empire, and as a monument of his success; but the Almighty had determined otherwise; for now, in the revolution of ages, was arrived that fatal day\*, emphatically called & "*day of vengeance†*," on which the temple had formerly been destroyed by the king of Babylon. A Roman soldier, urged, as he declared, by a divine impulse, regardless\* of the command of Titus climbed on the shoulders of another, and threw a flaming brand into the golden window of the temple, which instantly set the building on fire. The Jews, anxious above all things to save that sacred edifice, in which they superstitiously trusted for security, with a dreadful outcry, rushed in to extinguish the flames. Titus also, being informed of the conflagration,

\* The 10th of August.

† Luke xxi. 22.

hastened to the spot in his chariot, attended by his principal officers and legions ; but in vain he waved his hand and raised his voice, commanding his soldiers to extinguish the fire; so great was the uproar and confusion, that no attention was paid even to him. The Romans, wiffully deaf, instead of extinguishing the flames, spread them wider and wider. Actuated by the fiercest impulses of rancour and revenge against the Jews, they rushed furiously upon them, slaying some with the sword, trampling others under their feet, or crushing them to death against the waifs. Many, fassing amongst the smoking ruins of the porches and galleries, were suffocated. The unarmed poor, and even sick persons, were slaughtered without mercy. Of these unhappy people numbers were feft weftering in their gore. Multitudes of the dead and dying were heaped round about the altar, to which they had formerly fled for protection, while the steps that

led from it into the outer court were **liter-**  
ally deluged with their blood.

Finding it impossible to restrain the impetuosity and cruelty of his **soldiers**, the commander in chief proceeded, with some of his superior officers, to take a survey of those parts of the edifice which were still uninjured by the conflagration. It had not, at this time, reached the inner temple, which Titus entered, and viewed with silent admiration. Struck with the **magnificence** of its decorations, which even surpassed the report of fame concerning them ; and perceiving that the sanctuary had not yet caught fire, he **redoubled** his efforts to stop the progress of the flames. He condescended even to intreat his soldiers to exert all their strength and activity for this purpose, and appointed a centurion of the guards to punish them, if they again disregarded him ; **but** all was ill vain, The delirious rage of the so!

diery knew no bounds. Eager for plunder and for slaughter, they alike condemned the solicitations and the menaces of their general. Even while he was thus intent upon the preservation of the sanctuary, one of the soldiers was actually employed 'in setting fire to the door posts, which caused the conflagration to become general. Titus and his officers were now compelled to retire, and none remained to check the fury of the soldiers or the flames. The Romans, exasperated to the highest pitch against the Jews, seized every person whom they could find, and, without the least regard to sex, age, or quality, first plundered, and then slew them. The old and the young, the common people and the priests, those who surrendered and those who resisted, were equally involved in this horrible and indiscriminate carnage. Meanwhile the temple continued burning, until at length, vast as was its size, the flames completely enveloped the whole building ; which,

from the extent of the conflagration, impressed the distant spectator with an idea that the whole city was now on fire.

The tumult and disorder which ensued upon this event it is impossible (says Josephus) for language to describe. The Roman legions made the most horrid outcries ; the rebels, finding themselves exposed to the fury of both fire and sword, screamed dreadfully ; While the unhappy people who were pent up between the enemy and the "flames, deplored their situation in the most pitiable complaints. Those on the hill and those in the city seemed mutually to return the groans of each other. Such as were expiring through famine, were revived by this scene, and seemed to acquire new spirits to deplore their misfortunes. The lamentations from the city were re-echoed from the adjacent mountains, and places beyond Jordan. The flames which enveloped the temple were so violent and impetuous, that the lofty hill on which it



stood appeared, even from its deep foundation, as one large fire. The blood of the sufferers flowed in proportion to the rage of this destructive element ; and the number of the slain exceeded all calculation. The ground could not be seen for the dead bodies, over which the Romans tramped in pursuit of the fugitives ; while the crackling noise of the devouring flames, mingled with the clangour of arms, the groans of the dying, and the shrieks of despair, augmented the tremendous horror of a scene, to which the pages of history can furnish no parallel. -

Amongst the tragical events which at this time occurred, the following is more particularly deserving of notice : a false prophet, pretending to a divine commission, affirmed, that if the people would repair to the temple, they should behold signs of their speedy deliverance. Accordingly, about six thousand persons, chiefly women and children, assembled

in a gallery, that was yet standing, • on the outside of the building. Whilst they waited in anxious expectation of the promised miracle, the Romans, with the most wanton barbarity, set fire to the gallery ; from which, multitudes, rendered frantic by their horrible situation, precipitated themselves on the ruins below, and were killed by the **fall** ; while, awful to relate, the rest, without a **single** exception, perished in the flames. So necessary was our Lord's second premonition not to give credit to "*false prophets*," who should pretend to show • *great signs and wonders.*" In this last caution, as the connection of the prophecy demonstrates, he evidently refers to the period of the siege, but, in the former, to the interval immediately preceding the Jewish war\*.

The temple now presented little more than a heap of **ruins** ; and the Roman army, as in triumph on the event, came

\* Mat. xxiv. Compare verses 5, and 23, 24, 25, 26.

and reared the ensigns against a fragment of the eastern gate, and, with sacrifices of thanksgiving, proclaimed the imperial majesty of Titus, with every possible demonstration of joy.

Thus terminated the glory and the existence of this sacred and venerable edifice, which, from its stupendous size, its massy solidity, and astonishing strength, seemed formed to resist the most violent operations of human force, and to stand, like the pyramids, amid the shocks of successive ages, until the final dissolution of the globe\*.

• From its first foundation by king Solomon, until its destruction under Vespasian, were one thousand and thirty years, seven months, and fifteen days : and from its re-erection by Haggai, to the same period, six hundred and thirty-nine years, and forty-five days. It has been already hinted, that, by a very singular coincidence, it was now reduced to ashes in the same month and on the same day of the month, on which it had formerly been burnt by the Babylonians. These two eras are distinguished by another extraordinary coincidence, which Josephus, in one of his addresses to the Jews, pointed out to them as one of the signs which foreboded the destruction of their city. "The fountains," said he, "flow copiously for

For five days after the destruction of the temple, the priests who had escaped, sat, pining with hunger, on the top of one of its broken walls; at length, through necessity, they came down and humbly asked the pardon of Titus, which, however, he refused to grant them, saying, that, "as the temple, for the sake of which he would have spared them, was destroyed, it was but fit that its priests should perish also;"—whereupon he commanded that they should be put to death.

The leaders of the factions being now pressed on all sides, begged a conference with Titus, who offered to spare their

Titus, which to you were dried up; for before he came\* you know that both **Siloam** failed, and all the springs without the city, so that water was brought by the amphora\* i but now they are so abundant to your enemies,, as to suffice, **not only** for themselves and their cattle, but also for their gardens. This wonder you also formerly experienced when the king of Babylon laid siege to your city."

\* *J vessel containing about seven gallons.*

•fives, provided that they would lay down their arms. With this reasonable condition, however, they refused to comply; upon which Titus, exasperated by their obstinacy, resolved that he would hereafter grant no pardon to the insurgents, and ordered a proclamation to be made to this effect. The Romans had now full licence to ravage and destroy. Early the following morning they set fire to the castle, the register-office, the council-chamber, and the palace of queen Hefena; and then spread themselves throughout the city, slaughtering wherever they came, and burning the dead bodies which were scattered over every street, and on the floors of almost every house. In the royal palace, where immense treasures were deposited, the seditious Jews murdered eight thousand four hundred of their own nation, and afterwards plundered their property. Prodigious numbers of deserters, also, who escaped from the tyrants, and fled into the enemies' camp, were slain. The

soldiers, however, at length, weary of killing, and satiated with the blood which they had spilt, laid down their swords, and sought to gratify their avarice. For this purpose they took the Jews, together with their wives and families, and publicly sold them like cattle in a market, but at a very low price; for multitudes were exposed to sale, while the purchasers were few in number. And now were fulfilled the words of Moses : *"And ye shall be sold for bond-men and bond-women, and no man shall buy you\*."*

The Romans having become masters of the lower city, set it on fire. The Jews now fled to the higher, from whence, their pride and insolence yet unabated, they continued to exasperate their enemies, and even appealed to view the burning of the town below them with tokens of pleasure. In a short time, however, the walls of the higher city were demolished by the Ro-

\* Deut. xxviii. 68.

man engines, and the - Jews, lately so haughty and presumptuous, now, trembling and panic-struck, fell on their faces, and deplored their own infatuation. ' Such as were in the towers deemed impregnable to human force, beyond measure affrighted, strangely forsook them, and sought refuge in caverns and subterraneous passages; in which dismal retreats no less than two thousand dead bodies were afterwards found. Thus, as our Lord had predicted, did these miserable creatures, in effect, say, "*to the mountains, ' Fall on us ;' and to the rocks, ' Cover us\*'. "*"

The waffs of the city being now completely in possession of the Romans, the)\* hoisted their colours upon the towers, and burst forth into the most triumphant acclamations. After this, all annoyance from the Jews being at an end, the soldiers gave an unbridled license to their fury against the inhabitants. They first plun-

dered, and then set fire to the houses, They ranged through the streets with drawn swords in their hands, murdering every Jew whom they met without distinction ; until, at length, the bodies of the dead choaked up all the alleys and narrow passes, while their blood literally flowed down the channels of the city in streams. As it drew towards evening, the soldiers exchanged the sword for the torch, and amidst the darkness of this awful night, set fire to the remaining divisions of the place. The vial of divine wrath which had been so long pouring out upon this devoted city, was now emptying, and Jerusalem; once "a praise in all the earth," and the subject of a thousand prophecies, deprived of the staff of life, wrapt in flames, and bleeding on every side, sunk into utter ruin and desolation\*.

\* This memorable siege terminated on the 8th day of September, A. D. 70: its duration was nearly five months, the Romans having invested the city on the 14th day of the preceding April.



Before their final demolition, however, Titus took a survey of the city and its **fortifications**; and, while contemplating their **impregnable** strength, could not help ascribing his success to the peculiar interposition of the Almighty himself. "Had not God himself (exclaimed he) aided our operations, and driven the Jews from their fortresses, it would have been absolutely impossible to have taken **them**; for what could men and the force of engines, have done against such towers as these?" After this he commanded that the city should be razed to its foundations, excepting **only** the three lofty towers, **Hippocos**, Phasaël, and Mariamne, which he suffered to remain as evidences of its strength, and as trophies of his victory. There was **left** standing, also, a small part of the western wall, as a rampart for a garrison, to keep the surrounding country in subjection. Titus now gave orders that those **Jews** only who resisted should be slain;

but the soldiers, equally void of **pity** and remorse, slew even the sick and the aged. The robbers and seditious were all punished with **death**: the tallest and most beautiful youths, together **with** several of the Jewish nobles, were reserved by Titus to grace his triumphal entry into Rome. After this **selection**, all above the age of seventeen were sent in chains into Egypt, to be employed there as slaves, or distributed throughout the empire, to be sacrificed as gladiators in the amphitheatres'; whilst those who were under this age, were exposed to sale.

During the time that these things were transacting, eleven thousand Jews, guarded by one of the generals, named **Fronto**, were literally starved to death. This **melancholy** occurrence happened partly through the scarcity of provisions, and partly through their own obstinacy, and the negligence of the **Romans**.

Of the Jews destroyed during the siege, Josephus reckons not less than one million and one hundred thousand, to which must be added, above two hundred and **thirty-seven** thousand who perished\* in other places, and innumerable multitudes who were swept away by famine and **pestilence**, and of which no calculation could be made. Not less than two thousand laid violent hands upon themselves. Of the captives, the **whole** number was about ninety-seven thousand. Of the two great **leaders** of the Jews, who had both been made prisoners, John was doomed to a dungeon for **life**; while Simon, after being fed, together with John, in triumph at Rome, was scourged, and put to death as a malefactor.

In executing the command of Titus, relative to the demolition of Jerusalem, the Roman soldiers not only threw down the **buildings**, but even dug up their **foun-**

dations, and so completely levelled the whole circuit of the city, that a stranger would scarcely have known that it had **ever** been inhabited by human beings. Thus was this great city, which, only five months before, had been crowded with nearly two millions of people, who gloried in its impregnable strength, entirely depopulated, and levelled with the ground. And thus, also, was our Lord's prediction, that her enemies should *"lay her even xvith the ground,"* and *"should not leave in her one stone upon another\*,"* most strikingly and fully accomplished !— This fact is confirmed by Eusebius, who asserts that he **himself** saw the city lying in ruins; and Josephus introduces Eleazer as exclaiming, "Where is our great city, which, it was believed, God inhabited? It is altogether rooted and torn up from its foundations; and the only monument of it that remains, is the camp of its destroyers, pitched amidst its **reliques!**"

\* Luke xiv. 44.

Concerning the temple, our Lord had foretold, particularly, • that notwithstanding their wonderful dimensions, there should *"not be left one stone upon another that should not be thrown down ;"* and, accordingly, it is recorded in the Talmud, and by Maimonides, that Terentius Rufus, captain of the army of Titus, absolutely ploughed up the foundations of the temple with a ploughshare. Now, also, was literally fulfilled that prophecy of Micah,—*"Therefore shall Zion, for your sakes (i. e. for your wickedness), be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the Lord's house as the high places of the forest\*."*

Thus awfully complete, and severe beyond example, were the calamities which befel the Jewish nation, and especially the city of Jerusalem. With what truth, then, did our Lord declare, that there should

"the great tribulation, such as was not since  
 (the beginning of the world, no; nor never  
 shall be\*!" Such was the prediction: the  
 language in which Josephus declares its  
 fulfilment is an exact counterpart to it:  
 "If the misfortunes," says he, "of all na-  
 tions, from the beginning of the world,  
 were compared with those which befell  
 the Jews, they would appear far less in  
 comparison;" and again, "No other city  
 ever suffered such things, as no other  
 generation, from the beginning of the  
 world, was ever more fruitful in wicked-  
 ness." These were, indeed, "*the  
 days of vengeance,*" "*that all things  
 which are written (especially by Moses,  
 Joel, and Daniel) might be fulfilled.*"  
 Nor were the calamities of this ill-fated  
 nation even now ended; for there were  
 still other places to subdue; and our  
 Lord had thus predicted, "*wheresoever  
 the carcase is, there will the eagles be gath-  
 ered together†.*" After the destruction

\* Mat. xxiv. 21. † Luke xxi. 22. ‡ Mat. xxiv. 29.

of Jerusaïem seventeen hundred Jews who surrendered at Macherus were skin, and of fugitives **not** less than three thousand in the wood of Jarden. Titus having marched his army to **Cæsarea**, he there, with great splendour, celebrated the birthday of his brother **Domitian**; and, according to the barbarous manner of those times, punished many Jews in honour of it. The number who were burnt, and who fell by fighting with wild beasts, and in mutual combats, exceeded two thousand and five hundred. At the siege of Masada, Eleazer, the commander, instigated the garrison to burn their stores, and to destroy first the women and children, and then themselves. Dreadful as it is to relate, this horrid design was executed. They were in number nine hundred and sixty. Ten were chosen to perform this bloody work: the rest sat on the ground, and, embracing their wives and children, stretched out their necks to the sword: one was afterwards appointed to destroy

the remaining nine, and then himself. The survivor, when he had looked round to see that all were slain, set fire to the place, and plunged his sword into his own bosom. Nevertheless, two women and five children successfully concealed themselves, and witnessed the whole transaction. When the Romans advanced to the attack in the morning, one of the women gave them a distinct account of this melancholy affair; which struck them with amazement at the contempt of death that had been displayed by the Jews. After this event, if we except the transitory insurrection of the Sicarii, under Jonathan. all opposition on the part of the Jews every where ceased. It was the submission of impotence and despair. The peace that ensued was the effect of the direst necessity. The rich territory of Judea was converted into a desolate waste. Every where ruin and desolation presented itself to the solitary passenger, and a melancholy and death-like silence reigned



over the whole region. The mournful and desolate condition of Judea, at this time, is exactly described by the prophet Isaiah, in the following passage of his prophecy : *"The cities were xvasted xvithout inhabitant, and the houses without a man, and the land was utterly desolate, and the Lord had removed men far 'away, and there was a great forsaking in the midst of the land\*."*

The catastrophe which has now been reviewed, cannot but be deemed one of the ~~most~~ extraordinary that has happened since the foundation of the world; and as it has pleased the Almighty to make it the subject of a very large proportion of the prophecies, both of the Jewish and christian scriptures, so he hath ordained that the particular events which accomplished them, should be recorded with very remarkable precision, and by a man most

\* Isaiah vi. **11, 12.**

singularly preserved\*, qualified, and circumstanced for this purpose. But with respect to this latter point, he shall speak for himself: "At first," says Josephus, "I fought against the Romans, but was afterwards forced to be present in the Roman camp. At the time I surrendered, Vespasian and Titus kept me in bonds, but obliged me to attend them continually. Afterwards I was set at liberty, and accompanied Titus when he came from Alexandria to the siege of Jerusalem.—During this time nothing was done which escaped my knowledge. What happened in the Roman camp I saw, and wrote down carefully. As to the information the deserters brought out of the city, I was the only man that understood it. Afterwards I got leisure at Rome; and when all my materials were prepared, I procured the help of one to assist me in writing Greek. Thus I composed the

\* Three several times his life was preserved as by a miracle.

history of those transactions, and I appeal both to Titus and Vespasian for the truth of it; to which also Jufius Archelaus, Herod, and King Agrippa, bore their testimony." All remark here is needless; but it should not be forgotten, that Josephus was a Jew, obstinately attached to his religion; and that, although he has circumstantially related every remarkable event of that period, he seems studiously to have avoided such as had any reference to Jesus Christ, whose history (and even the genuineness of this is disputed) he sums up in about twelve lines. No one, therefore, can reasonably entertain a suspicion, that the service he has rendered to Christianity, by his narrative of the transactions of the Jewish war, was at all the effect of design. The fidelity of Josephus, as an historian, is, indeed, universally admitted; and Scaliger even affirms, that, not only in the affairs of the Jews, but in those of foreign nations

also, he deserves more credit than all the Greek and Roman writers put together.

Nor is the peculiar character of Titus, the chief commander in this war, unworthy of our particular regard. Vespasian, his father, had risen out of obscurity, and was elected emperor, contrary to his avowed inclination, about the commencement of the conflict; and thus the chief command devolved upon Titus, the most unlikely man throughout the Roman armies to become a scourge to Jerusalem. He was eminently distinguished for his great tenderness and humanity, which he displayed in a variety of instances during the siege. He repeatedly made pacific overtures to the Jews, and deeply lamented the infatuation that rejected them. In short, he did every thing, which a military commander could do, to spare them, and to preserve their city and temple, but without effect. Thus was the will of God accomplished by the agency, although contrary to the wish of Titus; and his pre-

dicted interposition, to punish his rebellious and apostate people, in this way rendered more conspicuously evident.

The history of the Jews, subsequently to the time of Josephus, still further corroborates the truth of our Saviour's prophecies concerning that oppressed and persecuted people. Into this inquiry, however, the limits of the present essay will not allow us to enter particularly. Our Lord foretold, generally, that they should "*fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations; and that Jerusalem should be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the time of the Gentiles should be fulfilled\**;" and these predictions may be regarded as a faithful epitome of the circumstances of the Jews, and also of their city, from the period in which it was delivered, down even to our own times.

\* Luke xxi. 24.

In order to demonstrate the accomplishment of these predictions, we appeal, therefore, to universal history, and to every country under heaven\*. The un-

\* " In the reign of Adrian," says Bishop Newton, "nine hundred and eighty-five of their best **towns** were sacked and demolished, five hundred and eighty thousand men fell by the sword, in battle, besides an infinite multitude who perished by famine, and sickness, and fire ; so that Judea was depopulated, and an almost incredible number, of every age and of each sex, were sold like horses, and dispersed over the face of the earth\*." **The** war which gave rise to these calamities, happened about sixty-four years after the destruction of Jerusalem ; during which time the Jews had greatly multiplied in Judea. About fifty years after the latter event, **Ælius** Adrian built a new city on Mount Calvary, and called it **Ælia**, after his own **name** ; but no Jew was suffered to come near it. He placed in it a heathen colony, and **erected** a temple to Jupiter Capitolinus, on the ruins of the temple of Jehovah. This event **contributed** greatly to provoke the sanguinary war to which we have just alluded. The Jews afterwards burnt the new city ; which Adrian, however, re-built, and re-established the **colony**. **In** contempt of the Jews, he ordered a marble statue of a **gaw** to be placed over its principal gate, and prohibited them entering the city under pain of death, and forbade them even to look at it from a distance. He also ordered fairs to be held annually for the sale of captive Jews, and **banished** such as dwelt in Canaan into Egypt. **Constan-**

\* *Newton*, vol. ii. *Diss.* xviii.

disputed facts are, that **Jerusalem** has not since been in possession of the Jews, but has been successively occupied by the Romans, Arabic Saracens, Franks, **Mamelucs**, and lastly by the Turks, who now possess it. It has never regained its former distinction and prosperity. It has always been trodden down. The eagles of idolatrous Rome, the crescent of Mahomet, and the banner of popery, have

tine greatly improved the city, and restored to it the name of Jerusalem ; but still he did not permit the Jews to dwell **there**. To punish an attempt to recover the possession of their capital, he ordered their ears to be cut off, their bodies to be marked as **rebels**, and dispersed **them** through all the provinces of the empire as vagabonds and slaves. Jovian having revived the severe edicts of **Adrian**, which Julian had suspended, the wretched Jews **even** bribed the soldiers with money, **for the** privilege only of beholding the sacred ruins of their city and temple, and weeping over them, which they wer peculiarly solicitous to do on the anniversary of that memorable day, **on** which they were taken and destroyed by the Romans. In short, during every successive age, and in all **nations**, this ill-fated people have been constantly persecuted, enslaved, contemned, harassed, and oppressed ; banished from one country to another, and abused in all ; white countless multitudes have, at different periods, been **bar-**barously massacred, particularly in Persia, Syria, Palestine, and **Egypt** ; and in Germany, Hungary, France, **and** Spain.

by turns been displayed amidst the ruins of the **sanctuary** ; and a Mahomedan mosque, to the extent of a mile in circumference, now covers the spot where the temple formerly stood. The territory of Judea, then one of the most **fertile** countries on the globe, has for more than seventeen hundred years continued a **desolate** waste. The Jews themselves, **stiff** miracufousfy preserved a distinct **people**, are, as we see, scattered over the whofe earth, invigorating the faith of the Christian, flashing conviction in the face of the **infidel**, and constituting a **universal**, permanent, and **invincible** evidence of the truth of Christianity.

In order to invalidate this evidence, the apostate emperor Julian, impelled by a spirit of enmity against the Christians, about A. D. 363, made an attempt to rebuild the city and temple of Jerusalem, and to **recall** the Jews to their own country. He **assigned** immense sums for the execution



of this great design, and commanded **Alypius** of Antioch (who had formerly served as a lieutenant in Britain) to superintend the work, and the governor of the province to assist him therein. " But," says **Ammianus Marcellinus**, " whilst they urged with vigour and diligence the execution of the work, horrible balls of fire, breaking out near the foundation, with frequent and reiterated attacks, rendered the place, from time to time, inaccessible to the scorched and blasted workmen; and the victorious element continuing, in this manner, obstinately and resolutely bent, as it were, to drive them to a distance, the undertaking was abandoned." Speaking of this event, even **Gibbon**, who is notorious for his **scepticism**, acknowledges, that " an earthquake, a whirlwind, and a fiery eruption, which overturned and scattered the new foundations of the temple, are attested, with some variations, by contemporary and respectable evidence, by Ambrose, bishop

of Milan, Chrysostom, and Gregory Nazianzen, the latter of whom published his account before the expiration of the same year\*." To these may be added the names of **Zemuch David**, a Jew, who confesses that "Julian was hindered by God in the attempt;" of **Rufinus**, a Latin, of Theodoret and Sozomen among the orthodox, of **Philostorgius**, an Arian, and of Socrates, a favourer of the Novatians, who all recorded the same wonderful interposition of Providence, while the eye-witnesses of the fact were yet living. The words of Sozomen to this purport are remarkable: "If it yet seem incredible," says he, "to any one, he may repair both to witnesses of it yet living, and to them who have heard it from their mouths; yea, they may view the foundations, lying yet bare and naked." Besides, it may be added, that no other reason has ever been alleged, why Julian should abandon his magnificent but impious design.

\* Decline and Fall, vol. iv. **8vo.** page 107.

Thus was this celebrated emperor “taken in his own craftiness,” and his presumptuous attempt to frustrate the plans, and falsify the declarations of infinite omnipotence and wisdom, converted into a new and striking evidence of their certainty and truth\*.

We shall now proceed to reply to two or three objections, which may be rashly opposed to the impregnable argument which the preceding account furnishes in defence of our religion.

I. It may be alleged, that the prophecies, whose fulfilment has been demonstrated,<sup>1</sup> were not written until after the events to which they refer were past.

Assertion is not proof; and even a conjecture to this effect, in the face of the his-

\* This subject is discussed at length, with singular ingenuity and force of argument, by the learned bishop **Warburton**, in his work entitled *Julian*.

toric testimony, and general sentiment of seventeen ages, would be ridiculous. On the faith, then, of all antiquity, we affirm, that the gospels containing these predictions were written before the destruction of Jerusalem, and ~~we~~ confirm this assertion by particular proof. The gospel of St. Matthew, who died previously to that event, supposed to have been written about eight years after the ascension of our Saviour, was published before the dispersion of the apostles; for Eusebius says, that St. Bartholomew took a copy of **it** with him to India; and the dispersion of the apostles took place within twelve years after the ascension of our Lord. Mark must have written his gospel at the latest in the time of Nero, for he died in the eighth year of that emperor's reign. The gospel by St. Luke was written before the Acts, as the first verses of that narrative **prove**; and the Acts were written before the death of St. Paul, for they carry down his history only to A. D. 63; whereas he was not crucified until the 12th of Nero.

the very year before the Jewish war commenced. Of Luke's death the time is uncertain. As to the Evangelist John, he both lived and wrote after the destruction of Jerusafem ; but then, as if purposely to prevent this very cavil, his gospei does not record the proph • ~~ies~~ which foretold it ! Learned men, indeed, differ with regard to the precise year in which the Evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke wrote their respective gospels ; but they universally agree, that they were both written and published before the destruction of Jerusalem. As to the gospel by St. John, ~~some~~ are of opinion that it was written before, and some after that event.

II. If it be objected, that, although the gospel narratives might be written and published before the destruction of Jerusafem, yet that the predictions relating to that event may be subsequent interpolations ; we reply, that this cannot but be considered as a preposterous supposition, because those predictions are not confined

to the **particular** chapters to which we have chiefly referred, but are closely and inseparably interwoven with the **general** texture of the **history**—**because** the character of the style is **uniform**—**because** there is no affusion, in conformity to the practice of the sacred historians\*, to the fulfillment of these **prophecies**—**because** such an attempt must have destroyed the cause it professed to serve, and, finally, because "no unbeliever of the primitive times (whether Jew or Gentile), when pressed, as both frequently were, by this prophecy, appear to have had recourse to the charge of forgery or interpolation." It may be added also, that, in modern times, no distinguished unbeliever (not even the arch-infidels Voltaire and Gibbon) has had the temerity so much as to insinuate a charge of this nature.

III. It may be alleged, that the accomplishments of our Lord's predictions relative to the destruction of Jerusalem, ought

\* *Vide*, particularly, Acts xi. 28. ' .

not to be deemed supernatural, inasmuch as the distresses of all great cities, during a siege, are similar, and because it is probable that, some time or other, such should be the fate of every city of this **description**; and that, since the obstinacy of the Jews was great, and their fortifications were strong, when war did come, Jerusaïem was more **likely** to suffer under that form of it than any other.

' In answer to this objection we remark, that it was not merely foretold that Jerusalem was to be destroyed, but that it was to be destroyed by the Romans ; and so it was. But was this then a likely event? When our Lord delivered his predictions, Judea was afready compfetefy in their hands. Was it a probable thing that it should be desolated by its own **masters**? Or was it a natural thing that they should be indifferent to the revenue which was derived from a country so **populous** and **fertile** ? - Again, was it **likely** that this petty province should provoke the wrath

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and defy the power, of the universal empire ? Or was it to be supposed that the mistress of the world, irresistible to all nations, instead of controuling, should deem it worthy of her utterly to exterminate ft state comparatively so insignificant ? Or did it accord with the disposition or custom of the Romans, like Goths, to demolish buildings famed for their ~~iniquity~~ and magnificence ? Rather ~~will~~ it not to have been expected that they would preserve them, to maintain the renown and glory of their empire ? Nevertheless, as we have seen, they did destroy them, and even the illustrious tempie of Jerusalem,, the chief ornament of Asia, and the wonder of the world. But it was predicted that " *thus it must be ;*" and therefore Titus himself, with all his authority and exertions, could not preserve it.

But there are a number of very material circumstances closely interwoven with the prophecy, that still further identify the events which fulfilled it, and demonstrate



that the prophecy itself was something very different from a happy conjecture, suggested by the aspect of the times, or conclusions from past experience. For,

1. Our Lord foretold, as "*the beginning of sorrows*," and as alarming harbingers of his "*coming*," as "*the Son of Man*," to destroy Jerusalem, that terrible calamities would prevail in various parts of the world, during the intermediate period : and, unquestionably, this was the case. But it is very material to remark here, that our Lord did not describe these calamities in general terms merely, as an impostor might have done, but distinctly specified them thus : rumours of wars—actual wars—nation rising against nation—kingdom rising against kingdom—famines—pestilences—and earthquakes, in divers places : which all came to pass accordingly, and nearly in the very order in which they were foretold. False prophets, also, were not merely to arise—but to personate the Messiah, to pretend to mi-

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**raculous** powers, and to deceive **many** and such were the characters and success" of those which actually appeared. Again, the prognostics are not described as "**sights**" merely, but as "**fearful sights**;" not generaffy, as " *signs*," but as "*great signs from heaven* ;" and such they were. These wonderfuf appearances stand last in the prophecy, and they occurred, according to Josephus, on the very eve of the Jewish war\*.

2. The investment of Jerusalem was to take place "*suddenly*," "*as a snare*," which predictions, as we have seen, were accomplished in the **most** surprising and extraordinary manner.

3. Our Lord declared also, that, "*except those days (i. e. the " days of vengeance") should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's† sake* (said

\* Vide page 34—40.

† i. e. for the " sake" of the christians, who, no doubt, prayed ardently for the termination of these calamities.

he) *those days shall be shortened.*”—And they were shortened accordingly : 1st, by the determination of Titus vigorously to push the siege by assault, in opposition to the opinions of his officers, who recommended the more tedious **plan** of block **ade** : 2dly, by the conduct of the Jews themselves, who accelerated the capture of their city by intestine divisions and mutual slaughters, contrary to what is usual upon such emergencies, in which a common sense of danger ordinarily tends to unite contending parties against the common foe : 3dly, by the madness of the factions in burning storehouses full of provisions, and thus wasting the strength which was necessary for the defence of the **place** : 4thly, by the extraordinary panic by which the Jews were seized when the Romans made their **final** attack on the higher city, in consequence of which they fled affrighted out of their strong holds, which Titus afterwards pronounced to be **impregnable** : and, lastly, by the crowded state of the city during the siege, **which,**

as we have before remarked, occasioned pestilential disorders, and hastened the approach of famine.

4. Our Lord likewise foretold that his followers should escape the destruction of Jerusaïem ; and, accordingly, whilst countless multitudes of unbelieving Jews were fatally involved in this calamity, not a single christian perished therein ; for he that "*knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished\**," had said, that "*not a hair of their heads should perish†.*" Who, that seriously meditates on these equitable arrangements of Providence, can help exclaiming, with the devout psalmist—  
*"Verily, there is a reward for the righteous; verily, he is a God that judgeth in the earth!"*

5. Our Lord declared also that the extreme miseries of the Jews should be

2 Peter ii. 9.

† Luke xxi. 13.

without a parallel: and they certainly were, as Josephus himself repeatedly testifies, and as his history abundantly proves.

G. Again, our Lord foretold, that before the destruction of Jerusalem, the "*gospel should be preached in all the world as a witness unto all nations.*" This prediction, as we have seen already, was fully accomplished also; and yet, considering the character and condition of the instruments, the nature of the truths which they promulgated, the 'malignant opposition of their own countrymen, and the contempt with which, as Jews, they were regarded by the Gentile nations—nothing could scarcely have been •conceived less probable than such an event.

7. Our Lord further predicted, that the then existing generation should not "*pass away before all these things were fulfilled\**;" and, in conformity hereto, they were fulfilled within forty years from the

\* Mat. xxiv. 34.

date of the prophecy. This is a very different thing from their being accomplished some time or other. Our Lord had intimated also, that the Evangelist John should survive the destruction of Jerusalem ; and he survived it, accordingly, more than twenty-five years, and died at **Ephesus** nearly one hundred years old. How it came to pass that he who foresaw the persecutions of his disciples, and was therefore sensible of the dangers to which their lives would be exposed, should venture to predict that one of the most distinguished and zealous among them should escape martyrdom, and demonstrate, so long after the accomplishment of the prophecy, that the generation to which he addressed it had not even then "*passed away* ?"

Now, if the destruction of Jerusalem were a subject of human conjecture **more**ly, how came so great a variety of **remarkable** and improbable circumstances, as we have enumerated, to be unnecessarily in-

terwoven with the prophecy ? And how happened it that, in relation to those circumstances, as well as all others, of which the number is not small, the prophecy should be exactly fulfilled ?

IV. If this prophecy be ascribed to political sagacity, we would ask, on the supposition of the infidel, how it happened that a carpenter's son, living nearly the whole of his life in privacy, associating chiefly with the poor, without access to the councils of princes, or to the society of the great, should possess a degree of political discernment to which no statesman would deem it less than folly to lay claim ? Besides, how came he to predict the ruin of his own country, and at that very season, too, when all his countrymen turned their eyes to a deliverer, who should restore its sovereignty, consolidate its power, and extend both its boundaries and its renown ? And, lastly, how came he even to conceive, much more cherish, such an idea, diametrically contrary as it was to all

his stubborn and deep-rooted prejudices as a Jew ?

Thus we perceive that the very objections which infidelity opposes to our argument, instead of invalidating, tend only more fully to illustrate and confirm it. And such, indeed, must always be the happy effects of that hostility which is directed against the evidences of the christian faith, since, the more carefully and attentively we examine the foundations upon which it rests, the more perfectly **must** we be convinced of the immovable **stability** of the superstructure. Of that evidence the prophecy which we have reviewed most certainly constitutes a very striking and prominent part; from **every** light and position in which it can be contemplated it constantly derives new lustre, and **effect**; and it may safely be considered **as** an **unquestionable** proof of the divine foreknowledge of our Lord, and the divine authority of the gospel : and on this ground only, were it necessary, we might



securely rest the whole fabrick of our religion. Indeed, this remarkable prediction has always been considered, by every impartial person, as one of the most powerful arguments in favour of Christianity ; and in our own times, more particularly, a man of distinguished talents, and acknowledged eminence in his profession, and in the constant habit of weighing, sifting, and scrutinizing evidence with the minutest accuracy in courts of justice, has publicly declared, that he considered this prophecy, if there were nothing else to support Christianity, as absolutely irresistible\*."

Let us, then, if we are christians indeed, offer up our grateful acknowledgments to the Almighty, who hath laid such firm foundations for our faith. Let us exult in the inviolable certainty of his holy word, and assure ourselves that his promises are

\* See the Bishop of London's " Lectures on the Gospel of St. Matthew ;" and Mr. Erskine's eloquent speech at the trial of Williams, for publishing Paine's Age of Reason.

as infallible as his **predictions**: to "*the witness\**" within us, and to an acquaintance with the interior excellence of the gospel, let us labour to add a more **perfect** knowledge of the historical and moral evidence which defends it; that thus ~~we may~~ be better qualified to convince gainsayers. More particularly, let us attend to that *\*\* sure word of prophecy, whereunto we shall do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place†.*"

If we are christians in name only, let us receive a salutary admonition from ~~that~~ exemplary vengeance which was inflicted by the Almighty upon the whole Jewish nation; who, "**while** *they professed that they knew God, in works denied him ;*" and while they boasted that they were his peculiar people, remained "*strangers to the covenant of promise.*" Let us also seriously reflect, that, as then" he was not a Jew who was only one "**outwardly,**" "*in the letter*" merely, and whose praise was of

• 1 John v. 10.

† 2 Peter i. 19.

**men**—so now, in like manner, he only is a christian who is one “*inwardly*,” whose religion is seated in the heart; “*in the spirit and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men but of God*”.

Let the unbeliever, for whose **benefit**, chiefly, the preceding pages were written, seriously ponder their contents. Should the evidence which they contain in favour of Christianity fail to convince him of its divine origin, it may be important for him to ask himself the following questions: “Can I reasonably require, for that purpose, stronger moral evidence than 'this? Can I conceive it possible that stronger evidence of this kind should be afforded? Am I capable of forming a scheme, of historical and moral proof, which shall not be liable to greater and more numerous objections? If I imagine myself equal to a task, at once 'so comprehensive and profound, have I also the resolution to enter upon it, to publish the scheme,

which I shall construct, for the decision of the world, and to stake the credit of my infidelity upon it?"

But it may be proper to inform the deist, that the faith which we wish him to possess is not merely an admission upon evidence, that "*all scripture is given by inspiration of God*" (which, standing alone, has no higher moral value than the faith of education which he ridicules), but a vital, active principle, a faith that will "*purify his heart;*" that "*works by love;*" that will enable him to "*fight the good fight,*" "*to overcome the world,*" and to obtain "*a crown of life,*" and "*an incorruptible inheritance*" in heaven\*. It may be proper also to remind the unbeliever, that the evidence which has been adduced constitutes one only of those numerous bulwarks, more impregnable than the towers of Jerusalem, which encompass and defend Christianity. But if this be the fact

\* Acts xv. 9 ; Gal. v. 6 ; 2 Tim. iv. 7 ; 1 John v. 4, 5 ; James i. 3, 12 ; 1 Peter i. 4, 5.

—and is it not? how great must be his temerity! how hopeless his warfare! how certain his defeat!

To the Jew we would say—Suspend, if it be practicable, the prejudices which you inherit from your forefathers, whilst you ponder, for one hour, the important and interesting subject of these pages—to you peculiarly interesting and important. Is it possible that you can attentively reflect upon the destruction of "the beloved city," the dispersion of your nation into all countries—the terrible calamities which have every where pursued them, for nearly 1800 years, even unto this day—and not trace therein the condign and predicted punishment of their original rejection, and continued contempt of that very Messiah whose character your own scriptures so faithfully portray\*, and whose advent, precisely at the time of his actual appearance, they as clearly foretold†? But your ancestors did not only reject,

\* Isaiah iii. 53.

† Dan. ix. 26, 27.

they also slew their Saviour. "*Hut blood,*" said they, when calling upon **Pi-**late to crucify him, "*his blood be on us and upon our children.*" "A most fatal imprecation, and most dreadful fulfilled upon them at the siege of Jerusalem, when the vengeance of heaven overtook them with a fury unexampled in the history of the world; when they were exposed at once to the horrors of famine, of sedition, of assassination, and the sword of the Romans\*." Observe, too, the striking correspondence which marked their crimes in their punishment: "They put Jesus to death when the nation was assembled to celebrate the passover; and when the nation was assembled for the same purpose, Titus shut them up within the walls of Jerusalem†. The rejection of the Messiah was their crime, and the following; of false Messiahs to their destruction was their punishment J.

\* See the Bishop of London's Lectures, vol. ii. page 284 i and Bishop Newton on the Prophecies, Diss. 21.

t Page 63 of this Treatise.

† Ibid. 22;

They bought Jesus as a **slave**; and they themselves were afterwards sold and bought as slaves at the lowest prices\* : they preferred a robber and a murderer to Jesus, whom they crucified between two **thieves**; and they themselves were afterwards infested with bands of thieves and robbersf : they put Jesus to death, lest the Romans should come and take away their place and **nation**; and the Romans did come and take away their place and **nation**†; and what is still more striking, and still more strongly marks the judgment of God upon them, they were punished with that very kind of death which they were so eager to inflict on the Saviour of mankind, the death of the **cross**; and that in such prodigious numbers, that Josephus assures us, there wanted wood for crosses, and room to **place** them in§.

\* \* Ibid. 19.

† Ibid. 57.

‡ See page 59 of this Treatise.

§ See the Bishop of London's Lectures, and Bishop Newton, as before quoted; and this. Treatise, page 63.

Now, according to your own scriptures, that fatal catastrophe which involved your ancestors in all these miseries, was not to take place until after the coming and crucifixion of their Messiah: for thus spake the prophet Daniel, prophesying almost five hundred and forty years before the birth of the Messiah: *"Know and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem (i. e. after its destruction by the Babylonians) unto Messiah the prince, shall be seven xweeks, and threescore and txvo weeks \*: the street shall be built again,*

\* In prophetical language, a day is reckoned for a year, or seven years to every prophetical week. This key is given us by Moses, Lev. **xxv.** 8, and Numbers **xiv.** 34 - and also by Ezekiel iv. 5, 6; and by this it appears, that from the commission granted to Ezra to rebuild Jerusalem, until the **complete** restoration of the city, there **were** exactly 49 years or seven weeks. From this period until the first proclamation of the Messiah by John the **Baptist**, there were exactly 434 years, or sixty-two weeks. John's ministry terminated at the end of 3 years and a half, when our Lord began to preach *"the kingdom of **God**,"* and thus virtually, *"in the midst of the **week**, caused the sacrifice and oblation to cease"* (see Daniel ix. 27); for he himself declared that *"the **law** and the prophets (i. e. the ceremonial **law—or** law of sacrifices, &c. and the prophets*



*and ~~the~~ wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off", but not for himself; and ihe people of the prince that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be xvith a flood, and unto the end of the xvar desolations are determined\*."* Such is the prediction

of one of your own prophets ; which not only proves that the appearance and death of the Messiah were to precede the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, but also marks the precise time when, in

under it) *were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached."* And exactly at the end of this prophetic week, i. e. at the expiration of the remaining 3 years and a **half**, he confirmed the abolition of the Levitical law **by** the "*one offering of himself* upon the cross. This ever-memorable event happened precisely in the very month which completed the 490 years, or whole period of seventy weeks, mentioned by Daniel in the 24th verse of the above cited chapter; and it deserves the particular attention of the reader, that Ferguson, the celebrated **astronomer**, who applied the principles of his favourite science to this very prediction of Daniel, declares, as the result of his calculations, that the "prophetic year of Messiah's being cut off was the very **same as** the **astronomical**."

\* Daniel is. 27, 28.

the person of Jesus Christ, he actually did appear. The same prophet also thus describes the great purposes of his **advent**: viz. *to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness.*" And are not these precisely the very purposes for which, according to the writers of the New Testament, Jesus Christ came into the world, and which, before his departure out of it, he fully accomplished? Daniel predicted, moreover, that the Messiah should "*cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease:*" and accordingly, still to use his language, has not "*the daily sacrifice been taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate been set up?*" and has not your nation (to use the words of another of your prophets) abode "*many days without, a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim*?" It was likewise foretold by Daniel, that the

Messiah would "*seal up the vision and prophecy;*" and accordingly this **predic-**  
■ tion, like all the rest in your scriptures relating to the Messiah, was accomplished in Jesus **Christ**; for is it not clear that his favourite disciple St. John was the last inspired prophet? Did not the prophetic vision close with his "*Revelations?*" and hath any one since prevailed to unloose **the** mysterious and inviolable seal? It may further be proper to remind you, that **precisely** at the period of Christ's advent, a lively expectation of the appearance of your Messiah in Judea, was not only current throughout your own nation, but even obtained in many parts of the Roman empire. Hence the rise of those "*false Christs*" and "*false prophets,*" which we have described, and the credulity of your ancestors in believing their declarations. They promised temporal deliverance, dominion, and **glory**; therefore they were regarded. The true Messiah offered a release from the captivity of sin and Satan, a spiritual salvation, and everlasting glory

Finally, The catastrophe which we have described is pregnant with the most important instruction to the whole world. From amidst the ruins of Jerusalem, a voice may be heard calling loudly and incessantly in the ears of all nations, and saying, " *Beware that ye depart not from the living God!*" whilst the insulted descendants of Abraham, scattered over the face of the earth, re-echo, in despite of themselves, the solemn admonition, and, in effect, exclaim, " *Behold!* pictured in our fate the awful consequences of apostacy, and especially of our rejection of the Messiah, the Redeemer of the world !"

To the British nation, between which and the kingdom of Israel, during the period of its prosperity and glory, there are so many striking features of resemblance, these solemn warnings come with peculiar emphasis and import. May the Almighty mercifully incline us, as a people, to regard them with due seriousness and

attention, lest, after having been exalted like the Jews, by our civil and religious privileges, to the highest distinction among the nations, we at length fall, like them, into proportional ruin and disgrace. The progress of iniquity in our country is already sufficiently great, notwithstanding a variety of encouraging considerations\*,

\* The excellent character of our beloved monarch—the wisdom and harmony of his councils—the moderate, just, and humane temper of our government—the purity and equity with which justice is administered in our courts of law, and by our magistrates in general—the spirit of loyalty and unanimity which pervades the country—the patriotic ardour which is displayed in its defence—an evident revival of the spirit of religion in our national church, and also among those who dissent from it—the decline of bigotry—the cordial union of pious individuals belonging to different religious communities, and their friendly co-operation in the same benevolent undertakings—the erection of societies "for the suppression of vice," and the increase of schools for the religious instruction of indigent children—the establishment of many other institutions for the more general diffusion of religious knowledge in our land, and for imparting the blessings of Christianity to heathen nations : and, above all, the formation of societies for the more extensive dispersion of the holy scriptures in the world, and for promoting their translation into languages through which revelation hath not permanently spoken to man—all these considerations, and a variety of others which might be enu-

to excite in the mind of the serious christian very **alarming** apprehensions concerning the final issue of the contest in which we are at present engaged. Alternately he trembles and weeps while he contemplates the impiety and dissoluteness of our national manners, and the dreadful insen-

rnerated, we admit are not the features of a country forskin by the Almighty, and given up to be a prey to its enemies, but are rather encouraging **indications** of his gracious and paternal favour towards us. Still, when we reverse the picture, and seriously **reflect** upon the spirit of infidelity which pervades, and the abominable immoralities which overspread our country, it is impossible not to feel that we are justly exposed to the wrath and indignation of heaven. The profanation of the name of God, sabbath-breaking, neglect of religious ordinances, contempt of genuine piety, swearing, perjuries, drunkenness, adultery, prostitution, &c. and such an inordinate pursuit of earthly things as absorbs all **due** regard to those of a future state, are impieties and vices that dreadfully prevail in the different classes of the **community**; and which, while they exclude from the divine favour the individuals who are justly chargeable with such enormities, are secretly operating as so many principles of dissolution in the great social edifice of our country, tending to diminish the security of our civil and religious privileges, and to expose us to the dangers of an external hostility, against which our powerful means of national defence, under the blessing of divine providence, might otherwise prove an impregnable barrier.

sibility which every where prevails, both as it respects our deserts, and the successive manifestations of the divine displeasure against us. Without any invidious comparison between the moral state of the present and that of former generations, we would ask, what is the fact concerning ourselves ? Can any one say, that a pious, devout, and humble demeanour is the characteristic of our times, or that every species of wickedness does not alarmingly prevail throughout the land ? So far from the pure spirit of Christianity animating, directing, and governing our conduct, is there a principle or maxim of common morality that is not generally and habitually outraged among us ? What is the national feeling upon sacred things ? Honour beats the pulse of society here ? Talk of religion ; make only a distant allusion to it ; what is the effect ? A repulsive silence, a frown, a sneer, perhaps an insult. What is the national sentiment ? What are the constant topics of discourse ? to

what principles do we make our appeal ? By what maxim do we regulate our actions ? Are they the principles and maxims of a spurious philosophy, of an arbitrary system of morals, of public opinion, of custom, or the fashion of the day ? or are they the principles and maxims of the religion of Jesus ? Let daily experience reply to these questions. What, also, is our colloquial phraseology ? Are not words and phrases, prophane, immoral, and antichristian in their spirit and tendency, interwoven in its very texture ? and are not such as convey ideas of the first importance to mankind almost totally excluded from it ? ' The word holiness, for instance, which is descriptive of the " highest style of man " here, and the brightest jewel in his crown of glory hereafter, is almost banished from conversation ; and the appropriate expressions by which the progress of Christianity in the heart (and what is a Christianity that does not obtain dominion here ?) are contemn-



ed and ridiculed as **fanatical!** Nay, even an allusion to a general or particular providence, if it be made with becoming seriousness, is frequently conceived to indicate an offensive degree of religion. If these remarks are unfortunately but too applicable to the community at large, it is at least consolatory to reflect, that in all classes of it there are many bright and excellent examples of genuine piety and virtue. Still it may be said, what are these among so many? yet few as they comparatively are, they constitute the *salt*\* of our country ; and

This "*salt* preserves us; more corrupted else,  
And therefore more obnoxious **at** this hour  
Than Sodom in her day had **pow'r** to be,  
For whom God heard his **Abra'm** plead in vain†."

**The truly pious of the land, indeed, after all that can be said of our fleets and armies, and that is not a little, are the grand bulwarks of our national security; and the regard of Heaven to them and to their**

• Mat. v. 13.

† Cowper's Task, book iii.

prayers, is the surest ground of hope that we shall be protected against the overwhelming destruction with which we are threatened by the great scourge of modern Europe. It becomes us, however, to "*stand in awe,*" to cease from sin, "*to repent and do xworks meet for repentance;*" for, although our existence as a nation, and our institutions, may be preserved, we have still just reason to apprehend the less signal marks of the divine displeasure. It is not, indeed, for blind and erring man to estimate the proportions of national delinquency, or to fix the time, the mode, or the severity of national chastisements. Generally, however, it may be observed, that the number, value, and duration of the moral advantages which a nation enjoys, constitute the equitable measure of its guilt. Judging ourselves upon this principle, how malignant does our depravity appear! how greatly aggravated our transgressions, how deeply stained our ingratitude! Still we seem

insensible to our deserts. The sky gathers blackness ; we hear ‘the distant thunder that forebodes approaching **storms** ;’ but no salutary dread prevails, no radical, no general reformation is discernible. An atheistical dissipation of mind, a sensualizing gaiety of manners pervade, and awfully infatuate the country. Dark and threatening clouds, at intervals succeeding each other, have hung over us for a time, and then dispersed; and we flatter ourselves, therefore, that we **shall** continue to remain unpunished\*. Nay, from a consideration of our **national** means of defence and security, we grow **presumptuously** confident; and, **regardless** of the divine judgments, which are so **evidently** “ *abroad in the earth,*” we in effect say, like the **Jews**, “ *none evil can come upon us.*” The finger of prophecy points to the destruction of a second Tyre, distinguished above the nations for her **commercial** grandeur and **prosperity** ; and Britain, unawed, apt

\* Eceles. viii. 11.

appropriates the description to herself, saying not merely "*in her heart,*" but by positive declarations, *I sit as a queen, and shall see no sorrow !* But how rash and presumptuous is such language ! For shaff not He who sustains and controuls the universe, "whose power no creature is able to resist," and "who is the oniy giver of all victory ;" shall not he make vain the strength even of the proudest and mightiest kingdoms? '\* He that chas-  
tiset<sup>h</sup> the heathen, shall not he punish" nations who apostatize from him, under countless obligations to love, duty, and allegiance, with which the heathen are totally unacquainted? From this vain-glorious spirit, so fatal to the stability of empires, may the Almighty mercifully defiver us ! The evils of this spirit are incalculable. It dissipates that salutary fear of providential retribution, which keeps nations in awe. It generates that headlong presumption which rushes into dangers, and that haughtiness which precedes a

fall. It throws wide open the flood-gates? of iniquity, and paves the way to a radical and universal corruption of public morals. If, in the revolution of years, under the influence of such a **principle** of pride and vain confidence, this fast state of degeneracy become ours, it requires no spirit of divination to **perceive**, that the awful doom of all great and ancient empires, whose dissolution and ruin the voice of history deplores, must await us also. Then, indeed, the measure of our iniquities being once filled up, "*He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth,*" and before whom "*the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers,*" may render our national bulwarks, vainly deemed impregnable, as ineffectual for defence as "*the small dust of the balance,*"—and, as a final display of his vengeance against inveterate and incorrigible apostacy, may send forth His commission to some great and powerful nation, which, copying the example, and emulating the fame of the ancient Ro-

mans, may convert our **territory** into a waste like Judea, and our capital into ruins like Jerusalem.

For " that effeminacy, folly, lust,  
 Enervates and enfeebles, and needs must,  
 And that a nation **shamefully** **debas'd**,  
 Will be **despis'd** and trampled on at last,  
*Unless sweet Penitence her pow'rs renew,*  
**Is** truth, if history **itself** **be** true.  
 There is a time, and justice marks the date,  
 For long forbearing clemency to **wait** ;  
 That hour elaps'd, th'incurable revolt  
 7s punish'd, and down comes the thunderbolt."

' *The word once giv'n,* ' " and mutiny soon roars  
**In** all her gates, and shakes **her** distant shores ;  
 The standards of all nations are unfurl'd,  
 She has one foe, and that one foe, the world.  
 And if He doom that people with a frown,  
 And mark them with the seal of wrath, press'd down,  
 Obduracy takes place ; callous and tough  
 The reprobated race grows judgment-proof;  
 Earth shakes beneath them, and heaven roars - "  
 But nothing scares them from the **course**  
 To the lascivious pipe and **wanton**  
 That charm down **fear**,  
 With mad **rapid**  
 Down tq \*  
 They\*  
 C "

But all they trust in withers, as it must,  
When He commands, in whom they place no trust-  
Vengeance at last pours down upon **their** coast,  
A long despis'd but now victorious **host** ;  
Tyranny sends the chain that must abridge  
The noble sweep of all their privilege,  
Gives liberty the last, the **mortal shock,**  
Slips **the** slave's collar on, and snaps the lock."

**COWPER.**

FINIS.